

**BAD 1950s EC COMICS!**

**IMPACT**



**NO. 8  
JUNE**



**200  
2<sup>65</sup>  
CANADA**

# SHOCK

# SUSPENSTORIES

**JOLTING TALES OF  
TENSION  
IN THE  
EC TRADITION!**



**ELDSTEIN**

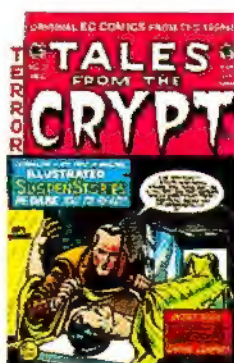


# BACK ISSUES!!

THE COMIC YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS IS PART OF THE CHRONOLOGICAL, FACSIMILE REPRINTING OF THE **FAMOUS** (AND INFAMOUS!) **EC COMICS** LINE OF THE EARLY 1950s! WE STARTED WITH THE **FIRST ISSUE** OF EACH TITLE AND ARE ON OUR WAY TO THE **BITTER END!** GET ON THE BANDWAGON, AND **FILL IN THE GAPS** IN YOUR COLLECTION FROM THIS BACKLIST!!



CRYPT #1



CRYPT #2



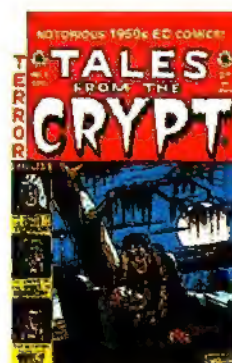
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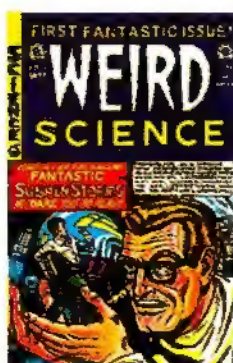
CRYPT #4



CRYPT #5



CRYPT #6



W SCI #1



W SCI #2



W SCI #3



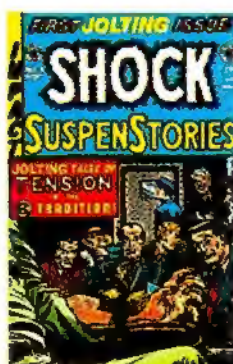
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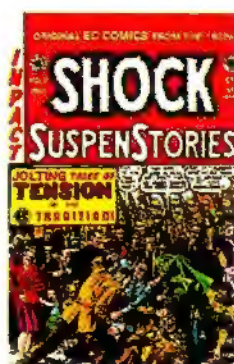
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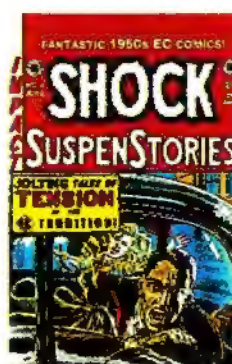
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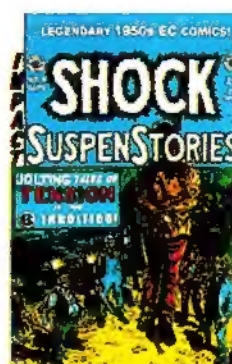
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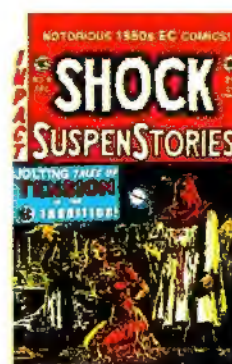
SHOCK #3



SHOCK #4



SHOCK #5



SHOCK #6

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# PIECEMEAL

THE BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS THAT HAD FILLED THE NIGHT HAD FADED NOW, AND THE SILENCE HAD CLOSED IN ONCE MORE. ERIC STAGGERED ACROSS THE LUSH LAWN TOWARD THE HOUSE, SOBBING. THE FULL MOON BATHED HIM IN ITS COLD LIGHT, SHIMMERING OVER HIS WHITE WET BODY. HE WAS GLAD IN BATHING TRUNKS AND STREAMS OF SCARLET OOOZED FROM THE SLASHES IN HIS PALE FLESH. IN HIS RIGHT HAND, ERIC CLUTCHED A BLOOD-SOAKED TOWEL, PRESSING IT AGAINST THE SHREDDED STUMP OF HIS LEFT ARM...

SIDNEY *KNEW!* HE *KNEW!*...  
ALL THE *TIME!* WE...  
WE *UNDERESTIMATED*  
HIM!



**A HORROR  
SUSPENSORY**

ERIC STUMBLED ONTO THE FLAG-STONE PATIO AND FLUNG HIMSELF AGAINST THE DOOR, POUNDING IT WITH HIS RED-STAINED FIST. INSIDE, THE HOUSE WAS SILENT. NO ONE STIRRED. OF COURSE NOT! HE AND SALLY HAD SEEN TO THAT...

OH, LORD! I NEED  
A *DOCTOR!* I'M  
*BLEEDING TO DEATH!*  
AND THE *DOOR'S*  
*LOCKED!* SALLY  
MUST HAVE FORGOT-  
TEN TO... TO RELEASE  
THE CATCH...



THE HOUSE WAS STILL. THE POUNDING GREW WEAK. ERIC SLID TO THE COLD PATIO, HIS HEAD WHIRLING. THE BLACK VELVET CURTAIN OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS BEGAN TO FALL, SHUTTING OUT THE NIGHT, SHUTTING OUT THE MOONLIGHT. A POOL OF BLOOD FLOODED OUT OVER THE NEATLY LAID FLAGSTONES...

SALLY... SOB...  
SALLY...





THERE WAS ONLY STILLNESS NOW. THE QUIET STILLNESS OF NUMBED SENSES. ERIC TRIED TO FIGHT OFF THE BLACKNESS BUT IT STUBBORNLY CLUNG TO HIM, DRIVING THE SIGHT FROM HIS EYES, THE PAIN FROM HIS AMPUTATED ARM. AND THEN, HE COULD SEE SALLY...COMING TOWARD HIM... OUT OF THE BLACKNESS. LOVELY...YOUNG...SALLY...

ERIC... DARLING...



SUDDENLY, THE BLACKNESS WAS GONE. THE MOONLIGHT SPARKLED ON THE SURFACE OF THE POOL WATER. SALLY STOOD BEFORE HIM, HER YOUNG FULL BODY REVEALINGLY ENCASED IN A BATHING SUIT...

SIDNEY! IS HE...?

ASLEEP! I GAVE HIM THE PILLS AND HE WENT OFF LIKE A BABY. HE WON'T BOTHER US...



AND THEN SHE WAS IN HIS ARMS, AND HE WAS HOLDING HER CLOSE, HIS LIPS SEARCHING FOR HERS, FINDING THEM, AND FEELING OF THEIR SOFTNESS...

SALLY, BABY! ERIC... MY SWEET...



HOW MANY TIMES HAD THEY MET LIKE THAT, THERE, BY THE POOL, IN THE DARKNESS? HOW MANY TIMES HAD THEY KISSED, AND HELD EACH OTHER, THEN PLAYFULLY DIVED INTO THE WARM STILL WATER?...



HOW MANY TIMES? HOW HAD IT ALL STARTED? THE POOL FADED. THE DARKNESS CLOSED IN AGAIN. THEN ERIC SAW HIMSELF STANDING BEFORE HIS ELDER BROTHER'S PALATIAL HOUSE... SUITCASE IN HAND...

ERIC! ERIC, YOU SURPRISE, OLD SON OF A GUN! SIDNEY! I WAS PASSING THROUGH TOWN BETWEEN JOBS AND THOUGHT I'D LOOK YOU UP!



SIDNEY HAD BEEN DELIGHTED TO SEE HIM. AND THEN, SALLY CAME OUT OF NOWHERE AND ERIC SAW HER, AND THE WHOLE WORLD WENT TOPSY-TURVY...

SALLY DEAR! THIS IS THE KID BROTHER I'VE TOLD YOU SO MUCH ABOUT! THIS IS ERIC! ERIC... MY WIFE... SALLY!

HELLO, ERIC!

SALLY...



THAT WAS THE START OF IT. THEY HAD LOOKED AT EACH OTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME AND IT HAD HAPPENED. LIKE A TIDAL WAVE RUSHING ACROSS A TINY TROPICAL ISLE... ENGULFING...

SIDNEY WROTE ME ABOUT YOU, SALLY, BUT I NEVER EXPECTED... THIS! YOU'RE VERY LOVELY.

HE SPOKE ABOUT YOU AS THOUGH YOU WERE A CHILD, ERIC. I... I HAD PICTURED YOU SO DIFFERENTLY...





AND THEN, DINNER THAT FIRST NIGHT...AND ERIC STEALING GLANCES AT SALLY SEATED OPPOSITE HIM...THEIR EYES MEETING WHILE SIDNEY CHATTED AIMLESSLY...

AFTER DINNER I MUST SHOW YOU MY *MARINE* COLLECTION, ERIC. I'VE RECENTLY ACQUIRED SOME *RARE SPECIMENS!*

HUH? OH!  
SURE, SIDNEY!  
SURE!



SIDNEY... THE NATURALIST... THE EXPERT ON UNDERSEA FLORA AND FAUNA. THE SHELF-LINED LIBRARY WITH ITS MYRIAD OF GLOWING TANKS...

AMAZING, SIDNEY! WHERE DO YOU *GET* THEM! I MEAN, THESE *FISH*...

THEY'RE *SHIPPED* TO ME FROM *ALL OVER THE WORLD*, ERIC! THIS IS THE MOST *VALUABLE* COLLECTION IN THE STATES! AND *NEXT MONTH*...



SIDNEY... RANTING ABOUT HIS COLLECTION... ABOUT NEW ADDITIONS... FUTURE SHIPMENTS! AND ALL THE WHILE HE PRETENDED TO BE LISTENING, ERIC WAS STUDYING SALLY... VIVACIOUS SALLY...

...THE *ONLY* ONE OF ITS *KIND* IN *CAPTIVITY*. I'D SAY IT'S WORTH ROUGHLY *SIX HUNDRED DOLLARS!*

YOU... YOU LOOK *TIRED*, ERIC! *COME*, SIDNEY! LET'S LET ERIC GO TO *BED*! I'LL SHOW YOU YOUR *ROOM*, ERIC!



SHE MOVED AHEAD OF HIM, UP THE THICKLY CARPETED STAIRS. HE WATCHED HER TRIM FIGURE GLIDE ALONG THE HALL AND OPEN THE GUEST-ROOM DOOR...

I BROUGHT YOUR THINGS *UP* ALREADY! HOPE YOU DON'T *MIND*!

NOT AT ALL, SALLY! THANKS!



HE BRUSHED PAST HER AND THEY TOUCHED, AND HE BREATHED DEEPLY, INHALING HER WOMAN SMELL AND THE PERFUME IN HER HAIR...

SIDNEY... HAS TROUBLE *SLEEPING*. I HAVE TO GIVE HIM *SLEEPING PILLS!*

OH?...



HE STOOD OVER HER, LOOKING DOWN INTO HER SOFT EYES, AT HER FULL LIPS...

WE HAVE A *SALT-WATER* POOL OUT BACK! I *USUALLY* TAKE A *DIP* AT NIGHT AFTER HE'S ASLEEP! PERHAPS YOU...

I'LL *JOIN* YOU! I'D *LOVE* IT!

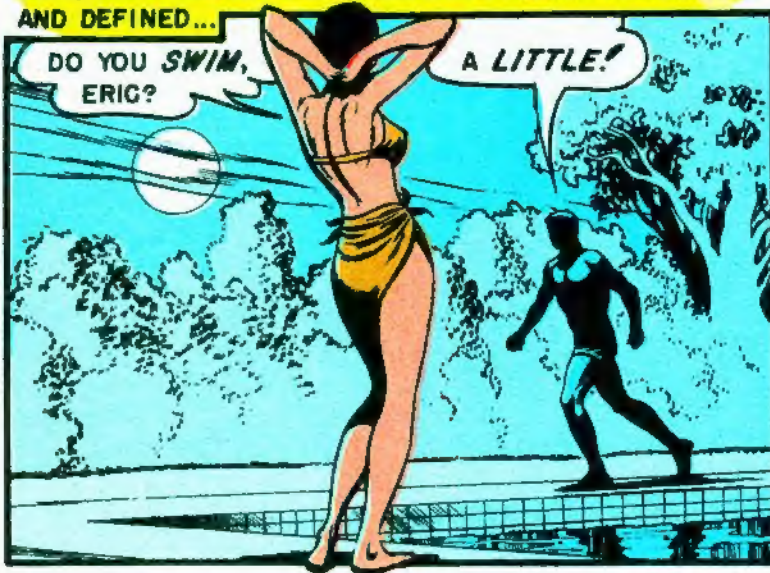


AND WHEN SHE'D GONE, HE'D STOOD AT THE WINDOW AND STARED OUT AT THE QUIET POOL LYING LIKE A MIRROR IN THE DARKNESS...UNTIL SHE'D COME OUT OF THE HOUSE AND LOOKED UP AT HIS WINDOW AND WAVED...





MOMENTS LATER, HE SLIPPED DOWNSTAIRS AND OUT INTO THE COOL NIGHT AIR. HIS FLESH TINGLED AS HE APPROACHED THE POOL. SALLY STOOD THERE IN HER SUIT, EACH CURVE OF HER EXCITING FIGURE ACCENTED AND DEFINED...



THEN THEY WERE IN THE WATER, THE WARM POOL WATER... STILL HOLDING THE HEAT OF THE DAY. AND THEY WERE SWIMMING... AND LAUGHING...

WHAT ABOUT SIDNEY?  
I MEAN... WELL...

SIDNEY'S OUT LIKE A LIGHT! WITH THOSE PILLS HE TAKES, THE HOUSE COULD COLLAPSE AND HE WOULDN'T HEAR IT...



AND LATER, SITTING AT THE POOL EDGE, SUCKING ON CIGARETTES, AND WHISPERING...

...THE DIM LIGHT FROM THE HOUSE, FALLING ON HER FACE, REFLECTING IN HER HAIR...

...THE TIDAL WAVE RUSHING HEAD-  
LONG...

WHY DID YOU MARRY HIM, SALLY? HE'S TWICE YOUR AGE!

I DON'T KNOW. PERHAPS HE OFFERED ME SECURITY...

...AND SO YOU'VE HAD ALL YOU WANTED, EH? IS THAT THE STORY?

YES, ERIC! UP TILL TODAY, THAT IS!



... LEAVING IN ITS WAKE, AFTER ITS FURY IS SPENT, ONLY RUIN AND SADNESS...

I...I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT, SALLY! I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME OUT HERE!

BUT YOU DID COME, ERIC! AND NOW THERE'S NO RETURN! WE'VE FOUND EACH OTHER!



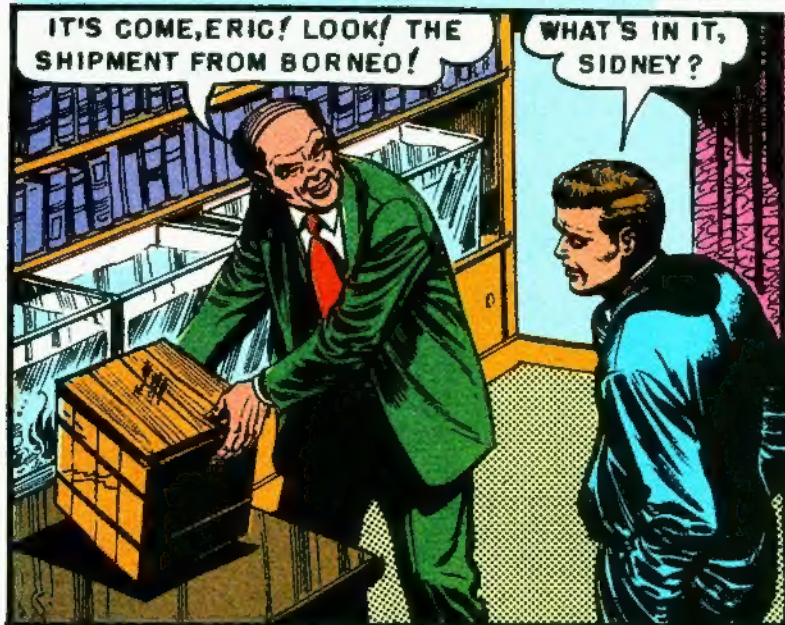
AND SIDNEY? WHAT ABOUT HIM? WHAT WILL WE TELL HIM? HE...

WE'LL TELL HIM NOTHING! AT LEAST, NOT YET! LET'S JUST WAIT AWHILE! LET'S WORK THIS OUT. YOU'LL STAY ON WITH US. WE'LL THINK OF SOMETHING!





SO ERIC HAD STAYED. HE COULDN'T HELP HIMSELF. BEAUTIFUL SALLY! DESIRABLE SALLY! LIVING A LIE...



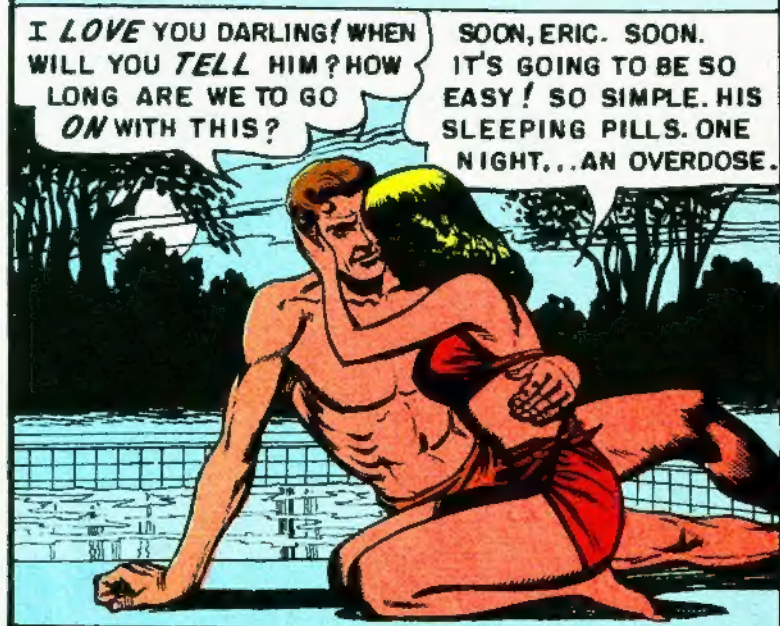
SIDNEY UNPACKED THE CAREFULLY CRATED CAN. HE EMPTIED IT INTO A WAITING TANK. A SINGLE MULTI-COLORED FISH...



THE INTERMINABLE DAYS...WITH SIDNEY, WHILE HE PUTTERED AROUND THE LIBRARY, FEEDING HIS COLLECTION OF SEA LIFE...



AND THOSE ALL TOO SHORT NIGHTS BY THE POOL... WITH SALLY...



THE SHOCKING REVELATION OF WHAT SALLY WAS PLANNING...



YES! BUT *MURDER*...



OH, SALLY...





THE MADNESS OF IT. THE SHEER HORROR OF WHAT THEY PLANNED TO DO! AND THOSE NIGHTS, IN THE POOL, WITH THE WORLD AND SIDNEY SO FAR AWAY...

HE EXPECTS HIS SHIPMENT TOMORROW. SOME RARE FISH. I'LL TELL THEM HE COULDN'T SLEEP! HE TOOK TOO MANY PILLS.

HOW WILL YOU...?



I'LL GIVE HIM HIS USUAL AMOUNT...DISSOLVE THE REST IN HIS WATER. HE'LL NEVER KNOW!

I'M... I'M COLD, SALLY! LET'S GO INSIDE...



AND THEN, THIS EVENING...SITTING AT DINNER...

THE DOORBELL! I'LL GET IT! IT'S PROBABLY FOR ME! MY SHIPMENT...

ALL RIGHT, DEAR!



SIDNEY...HURRYING OFF...LIKE A CHILD...EXCITED WITH A NEW TOY...

THIS IS IT, HONEY! AFTER TONIGHT, WE'RE FREE!

I...I HOPE SO, SALLY! I HOPE SO!



SIDNEY FINALLY RETURNED TO THE DINNER TABLE...

MEET ME AS USUAL, ERIC... AT THE POOL... TONIGHT!

HUSH! HERE HE COMES!

WHAT A BEAUTY! WAIT TILL YOU SEE IT!



... AND THEN, AFTER DINNER...

WELL, SID? WHAT ABOUT YOUR NEW SPECIMEN?

C'MON! I'LL SHOW IT TO YOU!

NOT TONIGHT, SIDNEY! I'M TIRED! I'D LIKE TO GO TO BED!



ALL RIGHT, DEAR! TOMORROW THEN, ERIC! WE'RE TURNING IN!

GOOD-NIGHT, ERIC!

GOOD-NIGHT, YOU TWO!





THE POOL WAS STILL WHEN ERIC CAME OUT TO IT. THE MOONLIGHT SHIMMERED ON ITS SURFACE. HE WAITED, PACING UP AND DOWN. FINALLY, SALLY CAME OUT OF THE BLACKNESS, TOWARD HIM...

ERIC... DARLING...



SALLY STOOD BEFORE HIM, HER YOUNG FULL BODY REVEALINGLY ENCASED IN HER BATHING SUIT...

SIDNEY! IS HE...?

ASLEEP! I GAVE HIM THE PILLS AND HE WENT OFF LIKE A BABY. HE WON'T BOTHER US... EVER AGAIN! HE'LL BE DEAD IN AN HOUR!



AND THEN SHE WAS IN HIS ARMS, AND HE WAS HOLDING HER CLOSE, HIS LIPS SEARCHING FOR HERS, FINDING THEM, AND FEELING OF THEIR SOFTNESS...

SALLY, BABY!

ERIC... MY SWEET...



SHE PUSHED AWAY FROM HIM, GASPING...

I'M YOURS NOW, ERIC! ALL YOURS!

SALLY...



HER EYES SPARKLED, PLAYFULLY! SHE DARTED TOWARD THE POOL EDGE...

WANT ME, YOU'LL HAVE TO CATCH ME...

COME BACK HERE, YOU LITTLE TEASE...



THE SPLASH. THE LONG WAIT TILL SALLY'S HEAD APPEARED. BUT SHE CAME UP WITH NO SMILE ON HER FACE. SHE CAME UP SCREAMING...

ERIC! MY GOD!



AND THE THRASHING... AND ERIC DIVING IN... NOT KNOWING WHAT WAS MAKING SALLY SCREAM...



SALLY! I'M COMING!



THE HOUSE WAS STILL. THE POUNDING HAD STOPPED. ERIC LAY IN A POOL OF BLOOD ON THE COLD PATIO. THE LAST DROP OF LIFE SEEPED OUT OF HIS ARM-STUMP ONTO THE RED-STAINED FLAGSTONES...



UPSTAIRS, SIDNEY GASPED AND SIGHED... HIS LAST BREATH RUSHING OUTWARD FROM HIS COLLAPSING LUNGS...



AND BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE SWIMMING POOL, OUTLINED IN THE FILTERED MOONLIGHT, SIDNEY'S NEWEST ACQUISITION, A *MAN-EATING SHARK*, TWISTED AND CAVORTED IN THE BLOOD-RED BRINE-WATER...



...ITS HUNGER FINALLY SATISFIED AFTER ITS LONG JOURNEY! SALLY HAD BEEN THE *MAIN COURSE*, AND ERIC'S ARM... *DESSERT*...

THE  
END.



# A SHOCK SUSPENSE STORY

# THE ASSAULT!

THE DOWNPOUR HAD BEGUN AGAIN. THE RAINDROPS PATTERED ON THE CAR-TOPS, RAN IN TINY RIVULETS DOWN THEIR WINDSHIELDS, AND DROPPED IN MINIATURE WATER-FALLS TO THE RAGING TORRENT SWEEPING BESIDE THE CURBSTONE. THE MEN HUDDLED UNDER THE SHELTER OF THE PORCH, THEIR LIPS SET TIGHT, THEIR EYES PEERING INTO THE DARKNESS BEYOND THE SHEETS OF FALLING WATER. MRS. CARTWRIGHT SAT IN THE ROCKER, SOBBING. HER HUSBAND STOOD BEHIND HER, STROKING HER SHOULDER, COMFORTING HER...

SOMETHING... SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAS HAPPENED TO HER! I KNOW IT! I FEEL IT! OH, LUCY... SOB... MY BABY! MY... SOB... BABY!

PLEASE, HONEY! THEY'LL FIND HER! DON'T CRY! SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT... YOU WAIT AND SEE!

WHAT DO Y'SAY, BOYS? SOON AS THE RAIN LET'S UP A LITTLE, WE'LL TAKE THE CAR AND SCOUT AROUND TOWN AGAIN!

IN THE EAST, THE FIRST GREY STREAKS OF DAWN GLOWED SADLY AGAINST THE HEAVY RAINCLOUDS. IT WAS ALMOST SIX A.M. MRS. CARTWRIGHT SHOOK HER HEAD...

IT'S BEEN ALMOST *THIRTY-SIX HOURS* SINCE SHE LEFT. WHEN SHE DIDN'T COME THE *FIRST* NIGHT, I THOUGHT SHE'D STAYED OVER ONE OF HER *FRIENDS' HOUSES* LIKE SHE ALWAYS DOES. BUT THEN *YESTERDAY*, AND ALL *LAST NIGHT*, NOT A WORD!

SOMEONE'S *COMIN'*! SOMEONE'S *COMIN'* DOWN THE BLOCK! MAYBE IT'S ONE OF THE *BOYS!* MAYBE.



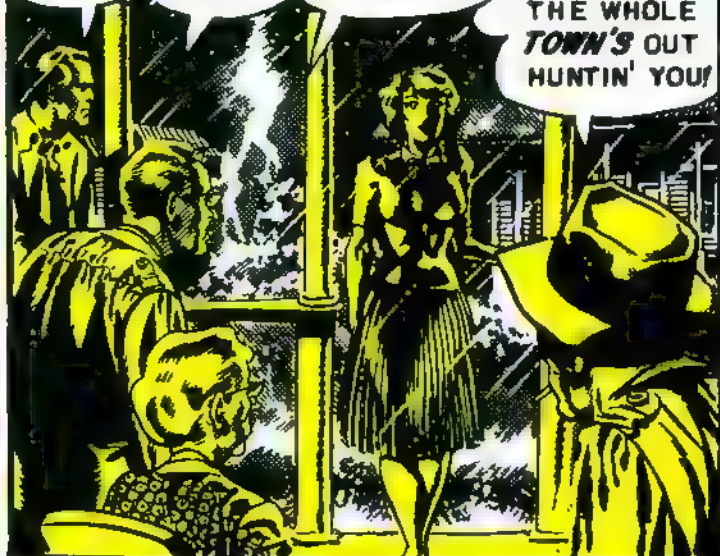
SHE CAME OUT OF THE WET, GREY DAWN. SHE CAME WITH HER HAIR STRINGY AND RUNNING AND HER FACE WHITE AND FRIGHTENED. SHE LOOKED AT THE PARKED CARS, AND THE GATHERED MEN WHO'D BEEN SEARCHING ALL NIGHT FOR HER, AND AT HER MOTHER AND FATHER...

IT...IT'S HER!

LUCY! LUCY!

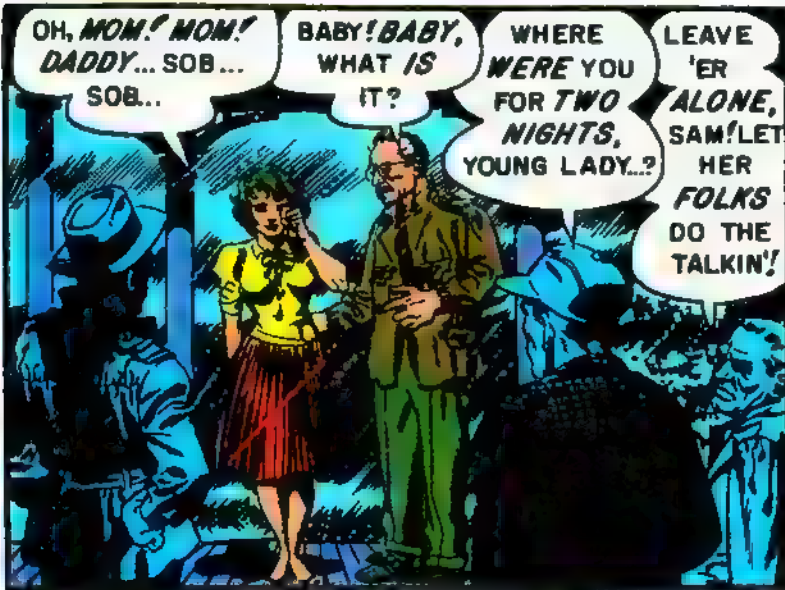
MY BABY! MY BABY!

CRIPES, YOUNG LADY! THE WHOLE TOWN'S OUT HUNTIN' YOU!

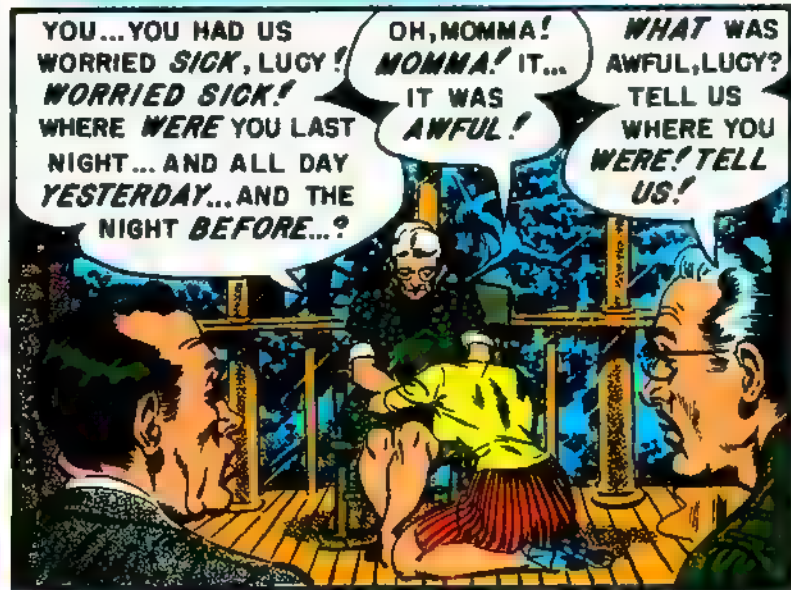




SHE LOOKED AT THE MEN WITH THEIR ANGRY FACES, AND AT HER MOTHER'S SWOLLEN EYES AND AT HER FATHER'S STERN GRIMACE, AND SUDDENLY, SHE BEGAN TO CRY...



SHE STUMBLED UP THE PORCH STEPS AND THREW HERSELF BEFORE THE ROCKER, SOBBING. MRS. CARTWRIGHT CRADLED HER DAUGHTER'S HEAD IN HER LAP, STROKING HER DRENCHED HAIR...



LUCY CARTWRIGHT LOOKED UP AND THE TEARS STREAMED FROM HER SEVENTEEN YEAR OLD EYES AND DOWN HER PALE WHITE CHEEKS. THE WORDS ERUPTED FROM HER MOUTH. THEY CAME FULL OF FRIGHT AND FEAR AND SHAME...

A HUSH SEEMED TO FALL OVER EVERYTHING. EVEN THE INCESSANT RAIN SUDDENLY LET UP. IT WAS SILENT ON THE CARTWRIGHT PORCH SAVE FOR THE BREATHING OF THE MEN AND LUCY'S PITIFUL SOBBING...

THE MEN STARED AT LUCY! THEY STARED AT HER WIDE FRIGHTENED EYES AND HER QUIVERING LIPS AND HER YOUNG BODY. AND THE ANGER GREW IN THEM. THEY WERE SILENT BUT THE ANGER BREWED. LUCY'S VOICE WAS PRACTICALLY A SCREAM...



OLD HODGES. THE TOWN RECLUSE. THE TOWN DERELICT. QUIET OLD HODGES. LIVING ALONE ON THE OUTSKIRTS IN HIS SHABBY CABIN. KEEPING TO HIMSELF. QUEER OLD HODGES ...

MR. CARTWRIGHT'S FISTS CLENCHED AND UNCLENCHED. FINALLY HE SHOUTED, AND HIS VOICE WAS HOARSE AND ANGRY AND WILD...





THEY STAMPED DOWN THE PORCH STEPS WITH INFURIATED FORCE, THEY SLAMMED INTO THEIR CARS AND THEY SHOUTED AND SWORE, THEY WERE ANGRY MEN. THEY WERE MEN WITH A MISSION...

WE'LL PICK UP THE OTHERS!

HE'LL BE SORRY, THE DIRTY @#X!

O'MON! THE POOR KID!

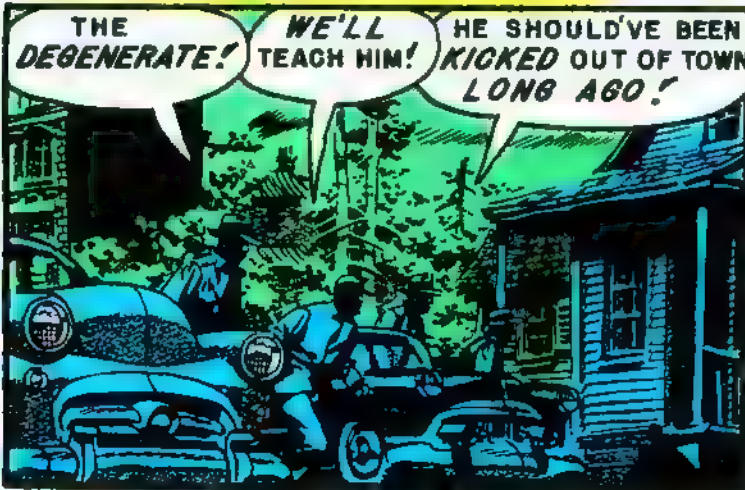


BY THE TIME THE MOTORCADE REACHED OLD HODGE'S CABIN, THE AMOUNT OF CARS HAD DOUBLED. THEY PULLED UP BEFORE THE SHACK WITH A SCREAMING AND SQUEALING OF BRAKES. ANGRY MEN POURED FROM THEIR INNARDS, THEY CAME WITH STICKS AND CLUBS AND ANGRY FACES...

THE DEGENERATE!

WE'LL TEACH HIM!

HE SHOULD'VE BEEN KICKED OUT OF TOWN LONG AGO!



THEY MOVED IN, THE OLD MAN FLAILED. HIS SCREAM ECHOED THROUGH THE DAMP MORNING AIR...



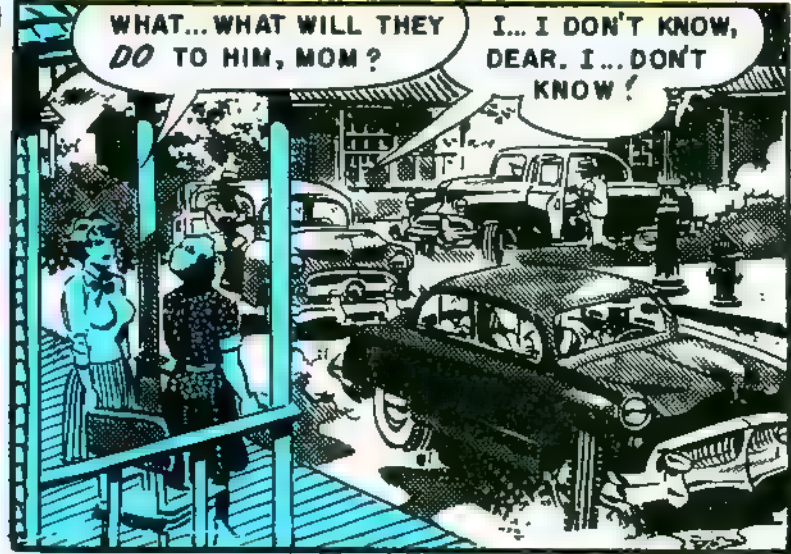
THE ANGRY CLUBS AND THE ANGRY STICKS ROSE AND FELL... ROSE AND FELL... AND THE SCREAM FADED...



THE COUGHING OF THE COLD WET ENGINES, AND THE ROAR AS THEY SPED OFF, AND THE GRINDING OF GEARS BLOTTED OUT THEIR SHOUTS. LUCY LIFTED HER HEAD FROM HER MOTHER'S LAP AND WATCHED AS THEIR CARS WHIPPED AWAY INTO THE GREY DAWN...

WHAT... WHAT WILL THEY DO TO HIM, MOM?

I... I DON'T KNOW, DEAR. I... DON'T KNOW!



THE DOOR TO THE RECLUSE'S SHACK CRUMPLED LIKE PAPER UNDER THE HEAVY ONSLAUGHT. THE OLD MAN SAT UP IN HIS BED WITH A START, AS THEY JAMMED IN. THE COLOR DRAINED FROM HIS FACE AND HE GLUTCHED HIS THREADBARE PATCHED BLANKET UP AROUND HIS NECK...

WHA... WHAT DO YOU WANT?

YOU KNOW @#X! WELL! GET HIM!



THE PATCHED BLANKET TURNED CRIMSON AND THE WHITE FORM BENEATH TWITCHED, THEN LAY STILL...



THAT'S ENOUGH!

HE'S DEAD!



THE SUN ROSE, PUSHING AWAY THE LAST OF THE BLACK RAIN CLOUDS. THE DAY WORE ON. ON STREETCORNERS, IN BARS, IN STORES THROUGHOUT THE TOWN, THE CONVERSATIONS WERE ALL THE SAME...

IT WAS TOWARD AFTERNOON THAT THE DOORBELL OF THE CARTWRIGHT HOME JANGLED FOR THE HUNDRETH TIME. MR. CARTWRIGHT OPENED IT WEARILY...

HE WAS TALL AND IN HIS LATE TWENTIES OR EARLY THIRTIES. HIS EYES WERE TIRED. . . LOOKING AS IF HE'D JUST GOTTEN UP. HE NEEDED A SHAVE...

THEY DID RIGHT! HE DESERVED IT!

THE POOR KID! WHAT A HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE.

HE SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN A FAIR TRIAL. IT WASN'T RIGHT WHAT THEY DID!

YES?

I... I WANT TO SEE LUCY! TELL HER... TELL HER **GEORGE** IS HERE. TELL HER I WANT TO **SEE** HER.

SHE DOESN'T WANT TO BE **DISTURBED!** SHE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE **ANYONE**. SHE'S IN HER ROOM AND...

SHE'LL **SEE** ME! ONE SIDE..

HE PUSHED PAST MR. CARTWRIGHT AND STRODE THROUGH THE HOUSE...

THERE'S NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT, GEORGE! NOTHING...

I JUST **HEARD** ABOUT IT... ABOUT **HODGES**... AND ABOUT **YOU**... AND WHAT THEY **DID** TO HIM, TO **OLD HODGES!**

NOW JUST A **MINUTE**, YOUNG MAN! YOU'VE GOT A NERVE... TO... **YOUNG MAN!**

WHO **IS** IT, DADDY? WHO... OH! IT'S YOU, GEORGE!

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU, LUCY!

LUCY? IS THIS MAN...?

IT'S ALL RIGHT, DADDY! COME ON, GEORGE! WE'LL GO FOR A **WALK!** I'D RATHER NOT TALK... **HERE!**

LUCY! WHEN ARE YOU COMING **BACK?** WHO IS THIS MAN?

I'LL BE BACK **SOON**, MOMMA! GEORGE AND I HAVE SOMETHING TO... **SETTLE!**

LUCY! I...

LET HER GO MOMMA! LET HER GO...



IT WAS QUIET IN THE WOODS. IT WAS ALMOST NIGHT AND THE BIRDS HAD STOPPED THEIR SINGING. GEORGE HELD HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS AND HE SOBBED. HIS WORDS FALTERED... BUT HE CHOKED THEM OUT...

I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU THE MINUTE I LAID EYES ON YOU, LUCY. YOU KNEW THAT, DIDN'T YOU?



'REMEMBER WHEN WE MET... IN THAT ROADSIDE JOINT? YOU CAME IN OUT OF THE NIGHT... ALONE...'

HELLO? NO DATE?

UH-UH... INTERESTED IN FILLING THE VACANCY?



'I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL I'D EVER SEEN. WE MUST HAVE DANCED TO EVERY RECORD IN THAT GRUMMY JUKE-BOX...'

I GOT A CAR OUTSIDE, LUCY! WANT TO GO FOR A RIDE?

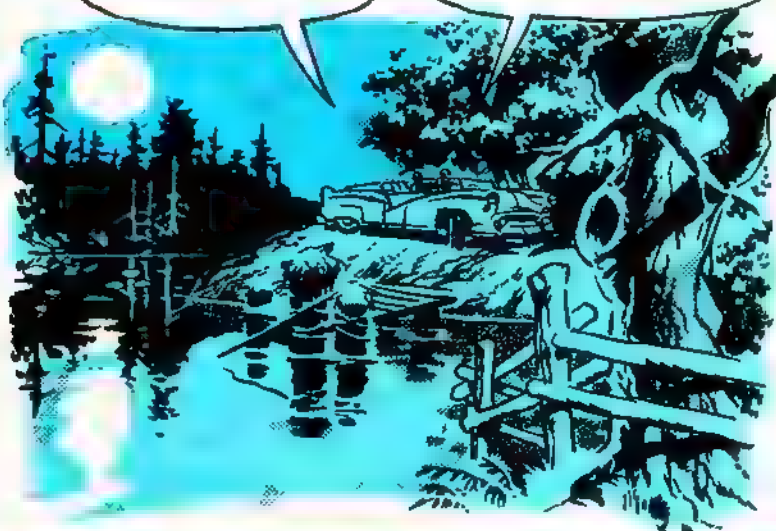
SURE, GEORGE! WAIT'LL I FIX MY FACE!



'REMEMBER HOW WE DROVE AROUND AND FINALLY PARKED NEAR THE LAKE...'

LIKE ME, GEORGE?

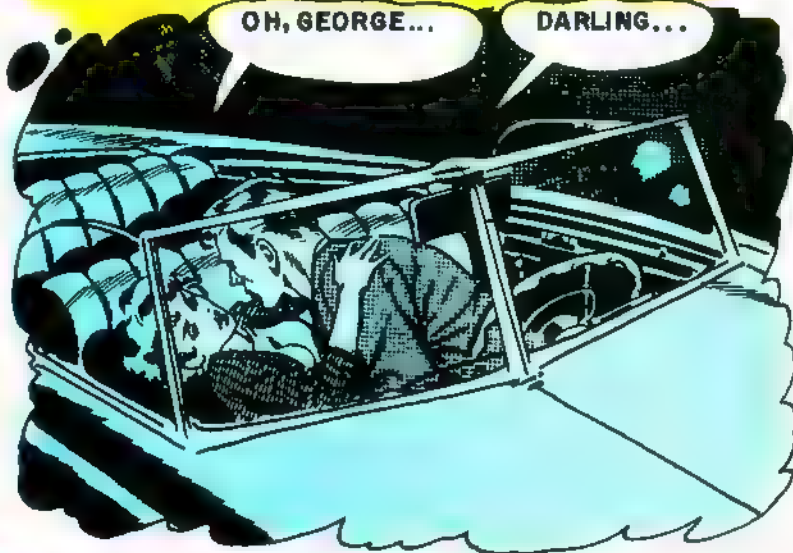
LIKE YOU FINE, LUCY!



'HOW I TOOK YOU IN MY ARMS... AND KISSED YOU... AND HOW THE MOON SPARKLED IN YOUR EYES... AND HOW I HELD YOU AND WE WERE CLOSE...'

OH, GEORGE...

DARLING...



'THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME, WASN'T IT, LUCY? THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME IT HAPPENED... IN MY CAR... BY THE LAKE... NEARLY THREE MONTHS AGO. BUT THERE WERE OTHER TIMES, WEREN'T THERE?'

IT'S... IT'S ALMOST MORNING, GEORGE! I'VE GOT TO GET HOME! THE FOLKS WILL... WORRY!

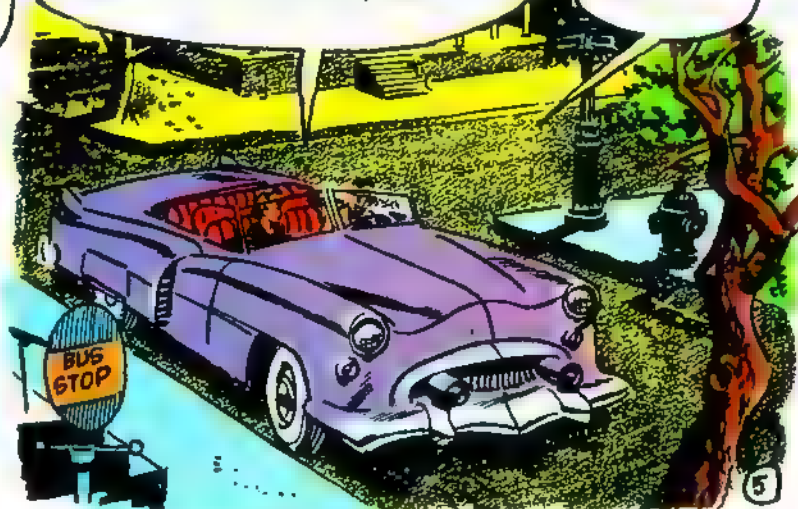
WHAT WILL YOU TELL THEM, DEAREST?



'YOU SLEPT OVER AT A GIRL FRIEND'S HOUSE, DIDN'T YOU, LUCY? THAT'S WHAT YOU TOLD THEM. BUT YOU LIED, DIDN'T YOU? YOU LIED! YOU SPENT THE NIGHT WITH ME... AT MY PLACE...'

LET ME OFF HERE! I'LL WALK THE REST OF THE WAY, GEORGE!

OKAY, HONEY!

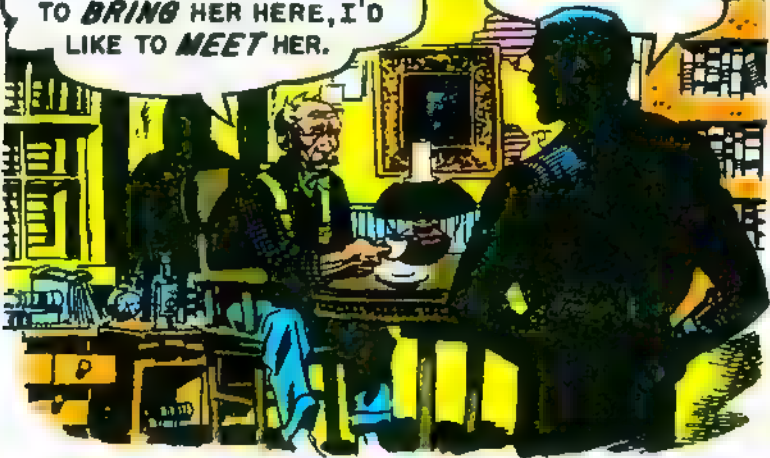




**'I KNEW THE OLD MAN, LUCY... OLD HODGES! I KNEW HIM WELL. HE WAS A GOOD MAN. HE KEPT TO HIMSELF... BUT HE WAS HARMLESS. I TOLD HIM ABOUT YOU...'**

**SHE SOUNDS WONDERFUL, GEORGE! SOMEDAY, IF YOU'RE NOT TOO ASHAMED TO BRING HER HERE, I'D LIKE TO MEET HER.**

**ASHAMED, OLD TIMER? WHY SHOULD I BE ASHAMED?**

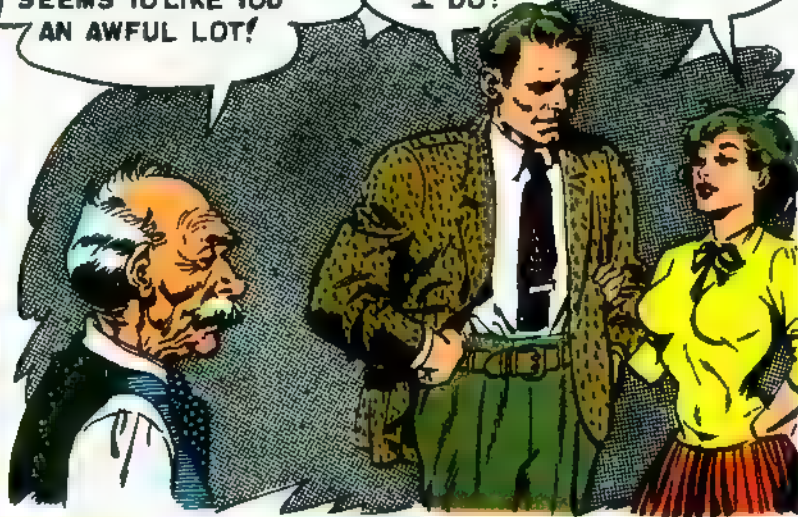


**'I LOVED HIM, LUCY! I LOVED HIM LIKE A FATHER. REMEMBER WHEN I BROUGHT YOU UP THERE TO MEET HIM?'**

**SO THIS IS LUCY! WELL, YOUNG LADY! GEORGE SEEMS TO LIKE YOU AN AWFUL LOT!**

**THAT I DO, POP! THAT I DO!**

**C'MON, GEORGE! LET'S GO!**



**'IT WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE LAST, WASN'T IT? THE NIGHT HE SUPPOSEDLY DID THINGS TO YOU. BUT YOU LIED, DIDN'T YOU LUCY? YOU WEREN'T IN OLD HODGES'S CABIN THAT NIGHT. YOU WERE IN MY PLACE, WEREN'T YOU?'**

**'SO YOU STAYED, DIDN'T YOU, LUCY? YOU STAYED AT MY PLACE ALL THAT DAY AND INTO THE NEXT NIGHT! AND THEN, TOWARDS MORNING, I PROPOSED. I REMEMBER IT'D BEGUN TO RAIN...'**

**'IT WAS FUNNY, WASN'T IT LUCY! SO FUNNY... TO YOU...'**

**HONEY! IT'S ALMOST MORNING! I'VE GOT TO TAKE YOU HOME!**

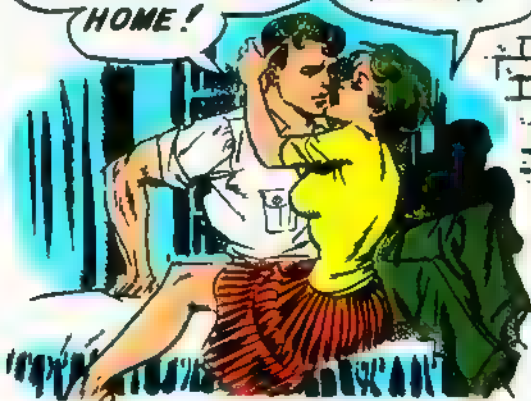
**NO, GEORGE, NOT NOW! KISS ME!**

**I... I WANT TO MARRY YOU, LUCY!**

**MARRY?! GEORGE! DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!**

**BUT, LUCY! I LOVE YOU! SURELY... YOU WANT TO MARRY ME! I MEAN, AFTER ALL THIS...**

**MARRY YOU, GEORGE? DON'T BE SILLY! I'M NOT READY TO MARRY ANYBODY! THIS! THIS IS JUST FOR KICKS!**

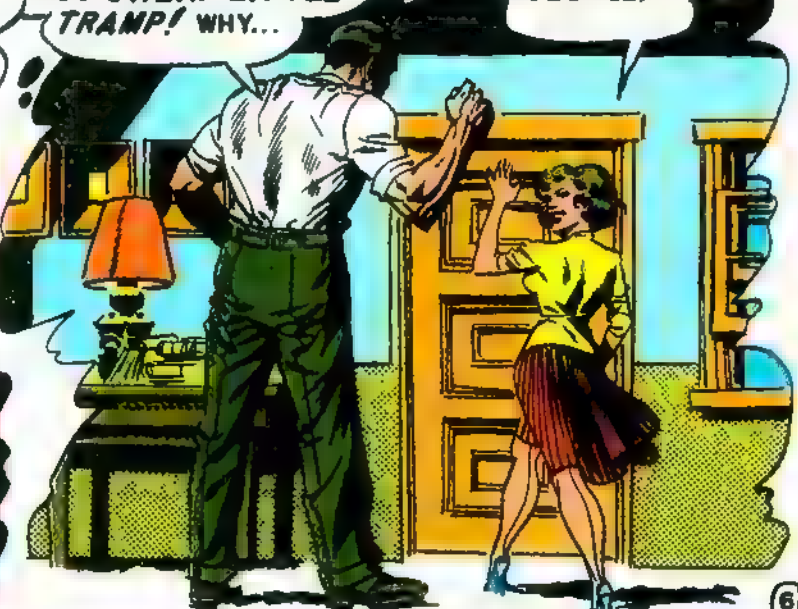


**KICKS!? HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?**

**YOU DON'T THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY MAN I'VE KNOWN, DO YOU, GEORGE? DON'T BE SO EGOTISTICAL! I'VE HAD PLENTY BEFORE YOU! I LIKE 'EM! AND YOU WON'T BE THE LAST, EITHER!**

**GET OUT! GET OUT, YOU CHEAP LITTLE TRAMP! WHY...**

**THANKS FOR THE KICKS, GEORGE!**





'AND WHEN YOU GOT HOME, YOU LIED TO THEM, DIDN'T YOU? YOU LIED TO SAVE YOUR LOUSY REPUTATION...'

IT WAS...IT WAS **OLD HODGES!** HE...HE **FORCED** ME TO STAY IN HIS **CABIN**. HE **LOCKED** ME IN... AND HE **DID** THINGS!

'YOU LIED, DIDN'T YOU, LUCY? AND HIS BLOOD WAS ON YOUR HANDS! THEY KILLED HIM, DIDN'T THEY?'

THAT'S **ENOUGH!** HE'S **DEAD!**

'AND WHEN I HEARD ABOUT IT, I CAME TO SEE YOU. AND I KNEW WHAT I HAD TO DO...'

ALL RIGHT, GEORGE! YOU WANTED TO **TALK** TO ME! NOW...**TALK!**

I'M GOING TO TELL THEM WHERE YOU **REALLY** WERE, LUCY! I'M GOING TO TELL THEM THE **TRUTH!**

I **DON'T** THINK YOU **WILL**, GEORGE! **OLD HODGES** IS **DEAD!** WHAT'S **DONE** CAN'T BE **UNDONE!** I HAD TO **PROTECT** MYSELF. BUT YOU WON'T TELL! FOR THE **SAME** REASON THAT **NONE** OF THE **OTHERS** TOLD!

OH, **WOULDN'T** I? I **LOVED** HIM, YOU **LITTLE** @\*?X!! I'M GOING TO SEE THAT YOU **GET** **YOURS** FOR THIS!

YOU'RE **FORGETTING**, GEORGE! WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH...WHEN YOU TELL THEM WHAT **REALLY** HAPPENED, YOU'RE **SENDING** YOURSELF UP THE RIVER FOR **TWENTY** YEARS! I'M **SEVENTEEN**, YOU KNOW...AND IN **THIS** STATE, THERE'S A **LAW**...

CHOKE...!

'WHAT ELSE COULD I DO, LUCY? YOU WERE **ROTTEN**...THROUGH AND THROUGH! YOU **DESERVED** IT! IT WAS THE ONLY THING I **COULD** DO...'

GEORGE...**DON'T!** WHERE DID YOU GET THAT **GUN**? **DON'T** POINT IT AT ME!

IT'S **OLD HODGES'S**, LUCY! HE **KEPT** IT...FOR **PROTECTION**. BUT IT COULDN'T **PROTECT** HIM FROM AN **ANGRY** **MOB**...**ANGERED** BY **LIES**...

THEY WERE COMING CLOSER NOW. IN A MINUTE THEY WOULD FIND HIM...AND HE'D HAVE TO TELL THEM THE **WHOLE** STORY...EXACTLY AS HE'D TOLD IT TO LUCY...TO LUCY...LYING THERE...WITH THE **SIX** BULLET HOLES IN HER FACE...

SOB...SOB...



# SHOCK TALK

President and CEO—Stephen A. Geppi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Dear Russ,

In SHOCK #7 I really liked "The Small Assassin!". I liked it, but I didn't like the ending. I just bought #7 yesterday. I can't wait till I get my next one! My cousin Tonya takes my comics and slaps them on my head. What should I do?

Dara Conner

Cincinnati, OH

## Say "ouch!"

Dear Mr. Cochran,

Thank you so much for your heroic effort in reprinting the EC line. I plan to subscribe to all the horror comics and SHOCK and CRIME. I have a question; when will the line of EC's run out? Also, will you write new stories, start over, stop production, or what? Most sincerely,

Chris Pittman

Franklin, MA

**SHOCK, for example, went to 18 issues—ten more to go. At 90 days per issue, that's 2½ years more. CRYPT, however, went to 30 issues. And so on.**

**We have no current plans to do new stories in this, uh, venue; nor in fact any plans to announce about the long run.**

Dear Mr. Cochran,

I've just read SHOCK #7 which held my interest throughout. "Beauty and the Beach!", drawn by Jack Kamen, curdled my blood. It wasn't so much the methods by which the wives are murdered that horrified me, but the way in which the men threateningly tell their wives what to do before murdering them.

"The Bribe!", drawn by Wood, has a dramatic realism in its depiction of corruption and human weakness. The ending of the strip has great irony. Great stuff.

"Infiltration", drawn by Joe Orlando, is another good one. This strip is an interesting variation of the 50s theme of alien infiltration, which perhaps reflects anxieties, insecurities and fears that many people felt during the Cold War period, when the threat of the Red Menace was a very real thing to people who worried about it. Translated into science-fictional terms, this becomes the Red Planet Peril. Last week I watched on TV one of my favorite 50s films, the original black and white version of "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" (56) directed by Don Siegel, [with its] nightmarish scenario [and] clever social comment. The infiltrators in this film have no emotions and don't need love. I've read the novel on which it was based, "The Body Snatchers" by Jack Finney (55) which, in its conclusion, ends up spouting an almost McCarthyite/Churchillian jingoism, eg: "...a fragment of a wartime speech moved through my mind: 'We shall fight them in the fields, and in the hills; we shall never surrender.'"

I like the strip adaption of Ray Bradbury's "The Small Assassin!". I read the story when I was a teenager. It has an atmosphere of fear, hopelessness and menace which this strip adaption also conveys. The comics work of George Evans adds realism to the brooding menace of Bradbury's story.

John Miller

Edinburgh, SCOTLAND

**And, it's hard to draw a convincing baby! We admit that, when it comes to "Infiltration"/"Body Snatcher" aliens, we would fight, too, by Jingo!**

Dear Mr. Cochran and Staff,

I am writing to follow up to my first letter, which appeared in SHOCK #6. You show neither age nor ignorance in never before hearing of The Cramps.

The Cramps are an American rock n' roll band led by Lux Interior and Poison Ivy Rorschach. They play wild "rockabilly voodoo" saturated with B-culture americana. I had read that Lux in particular was a childhood fan of EC horror comics so naturally I was led to you.

I hope to have shed some light on the subject for you. It is my suggestion that all you GhouLunatics out there creep down to your local music store and buy some recordings by The Cramps right now. Many thanks again, Mr. Cochran for bringing back these 'Notorious' ECs for us all to enjoy!! Many, many thanks!

Andy Terwilleger

Sunrise, FL

**Thanks. I think. (All our lives spent 100 miles from Nashville/Memphis, and we never heard of rockabilly voodoo! We feel deprived!)**

Dear Russ,

I just read SHOCK #7 and I'm a little bit confused about "The Bribe!". Why would the club owner pay over a thousand dollars a year to the fire inspector just so he wouldn't declare his club a fire hazard? I mean, surely with that amount of money the owner could put several exits in. Anyway I got to say I enjoy reading all the EC comics. Is it possible to order back issues of HAUNT, VAULT, CRIME and TWO-FISTED?

Nathan Little

Montgomery, AL

**Hm. \$1000 would buy a lot of carpentry in 1953. But don't be a killjoy! We'd have had a boring story—something along the lines of "Home Improvement."**

**Yes, ALL back issues are available. See below.**

Also available this month are CRYPT and WEIRD SCIENCE. Watch for VAULT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED next month. Don't forget HAUNT, WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY and CRIME. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details!)

**BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1, \$3 each (subject to availability). All others up thru issue #3, \$1.50 each. Issues #4 and up, \$2 each. Add \$5 per order (\$10 outside US) for S&H.**

We want MORE letters! Write to:

SHOCK  
RUSS COCHRAN  
POB 469  
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

## THIS COMIC REPRINTS SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES #8 (APR/MAY 53)

COVER by Al Feldstein

"Piecemeal"

"The Assault!"

"The Arrival"

"Sleep No More!"

Jack Kamen

Wally Wood

Al Williamson

George Evans

We welcome letters of comment. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We edit for clarity, accuracy and length. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters to do so we need your address on the individual letter.



Here I am, bright-eyed and bushy-headed, ready for another foray into the realm of the aesthete. Don't be misled—that's my happy-face! For I am very happy to share the following creepy creations from my rotten retinue of writers and artists! This header illo comes from Derek Malone, age 12, Conway, MO. —CK

## THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S PAGE OF FINE ARTS #17

**FIRST,** A lovely candle-lit vignette of the Vault-Keeper, caught in a common pastime of his, reading MY comic! Where else do you think he gets his ideas? Artist Andrew Raub shares a few words with us below. —CK



I love EC comics! They are truly frightening, and they send chills up my spine. I just have one question. Is The Old Witch available? I'd like to go on a blind date with her! She's everything a guy could want—good looks, charm, and great cooking abilities! Well, gotta go. The blood I'm writing this in is drying up. Make mine EC! Your fan,

Andrew T. Raab

Webster, NY

**She's available, but not advisable when she's visible. 'Cause when it comes to OW, only a BLIND date is possible!** —CK

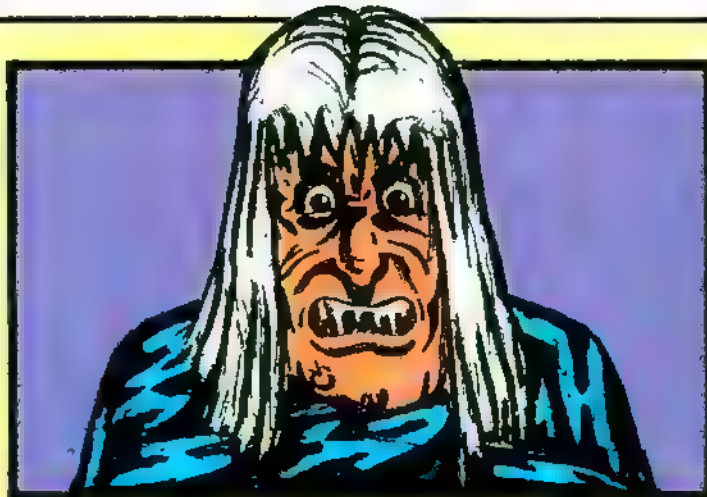
**A SHORT Lovecraftian lyric from our Friend Frank, paired with an eldritch drawing from Kurt Krause, Fountain City, WI.** —CK

### Galactic Thud

A galactic thud  
Time and space in a twist.  
Explorers searched for answers  
in the stellar mist.

What they found was appalling  
Nothing they could do.  
A ravening glowing inbiber  
was in the cosmic stew.

Frank X. Mattson III  
New Holland, PA



Thanks for publishing my poetry and drawing. My poetry always looks better to me in print than it does when I write it; hoo-ha, that's a fact! I have enclosed another poem, all those corpses and tombs get me inspired.

### The Merry Old Soul

He loved everyone  
And everyone loved him.  
He'd light up the party  
When everything looked dim.  
The sad day came  
He just up and died.  
A gloom set on the village  
and everybody cried.  
Then one night  
The night turned into day.  
He was back (a little rotten,  
Only just a little rotten.  
A state to which they didn't cotton.)  
But who's to say?



Frank X Mattson III

New Holland, PA

**WE'VE PAIRED Frank and Kurt again, because they both work so narrow! Thanks, boys!** —CK



**SPRINGTIME IS a'coming, and can baseball be far behind? Certainly not, even if it's bare-bones ball as depicted by Little Leaguer Elliott Kazan, age 6, of Richmond HTS, OH.** —CK

**Send your contribs (not returnable, not too long, not too big, legible doublespaced text &/or bold black art. Warning...we edit!) to:**

### THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S PAGE OF FINE ARTS

RUSS COCHRAN  
POB 469

WEST PLAINS MO 65775

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# SUICIDE

Patterson bit his lip and sent his fist crashing into the old man's face. There was a cry of pain and the old man staggered back and collapsed against the far wall. Weakly he lifted one hand and tried to protect himself from further attack. Patterson squinted at him, glanced around the basement to make certain that he was alone with the old janitor . . . then stepped forward ominously. His hand emerged from his jacket clutching a revolver.

"P-Please . . ." the old man stammered, "j-just lemme alone. I-I won't say nothing to the cops . . ."

Patterson grimaced and continued to move forward, the barrel of his gun aimed at the old janitor's forehead. "Too bad, Granpa," he muttered, "that you happened to be down here in the basement when I broke into the joint. I ain't gonna have you sing to the police as soon as I amscray . . . I already got two prison stretches behind me. This one, for breaking and entering, makes me a three-time loser! And I don't wanna spend the rest of my life up-river!"

The old man straightened up suddenly and tried to dodge past Patterson . . . but the young man grabbed him by the shirt and swung him around violently. With a grunt Patterson sent the old man hurtling across the basement toward the big high-compression steam boiler. The frightened janitor crashed into the boiler and slumped to the floor, his head resting on the concrete. Patterson continued his ominous advance, his

forefinger tightening around the gun trigger.

"Sorry!" Patterson mumbled as he pulled the trigger. There was a sharp roar, and the old man's body jerked as if he were a puppet being manipulated by strings. Patterson stepped forward and, with his free hand, dragged the old man back to the steam boiler. He prodded the body until it sat propped against the boiler, the old man's head resting on the metal and staring out lifelessly.

"One more shot," Patterson mumbled, "right through the first bullet hole . . . with the gun held close so that the skin gets burned and the cops'll think he pulled the trigger on himself and committed suicide!"

Patterson chuckled aloud: SUICIDE! He'd pull the trigger again, then fasten the murder gun into his victim's hand. The Law'd never be able to prove that the old geezer hadn't croaked himself!

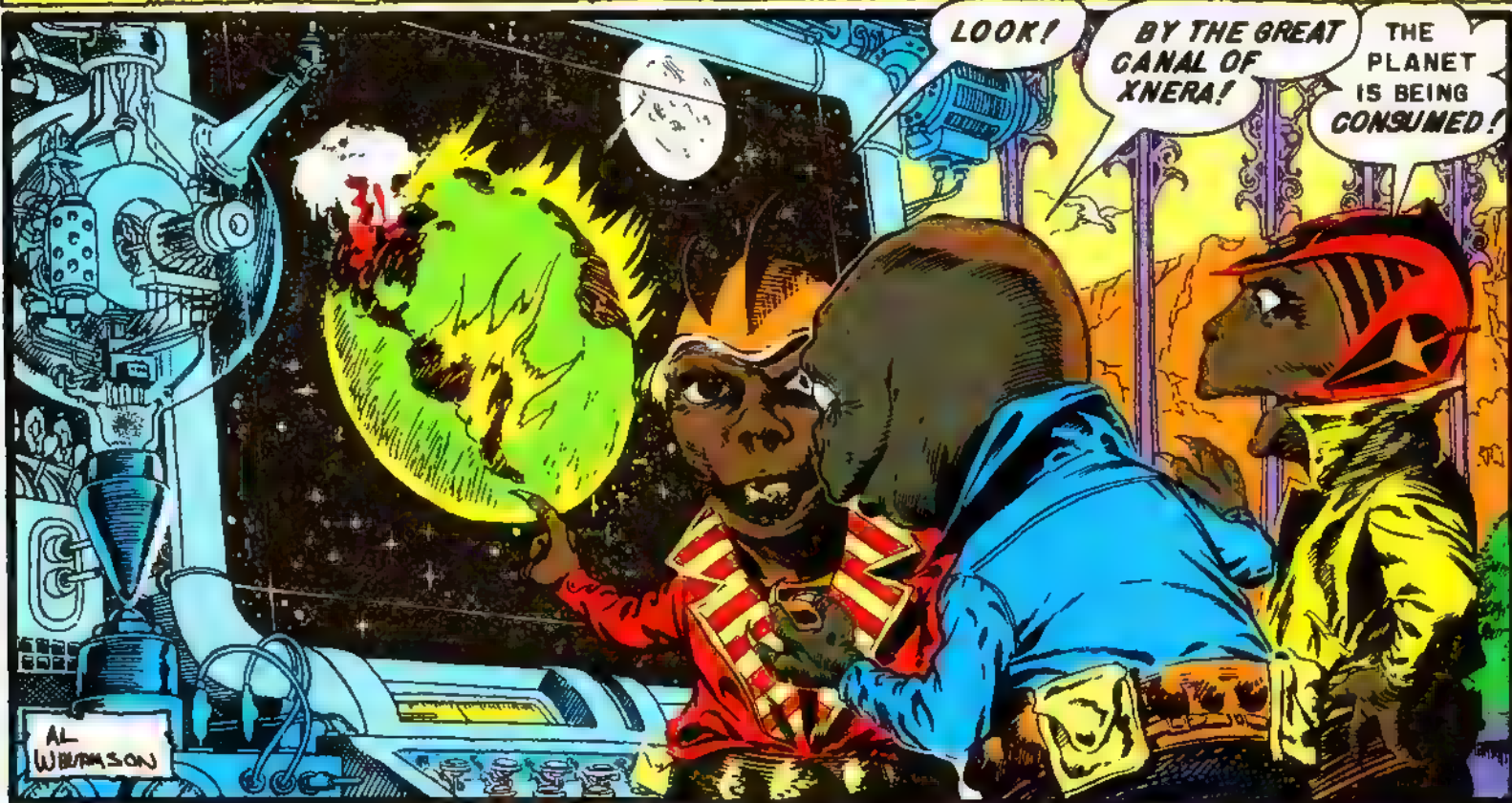
Crouching low over the lifeless janitor, Patterson shoved the gun forward so that the barrel touched the old man's forehead at precisely the point where the fatal bullet had gone seconds before. *SUICIDE*. Patterson repeated as he pulled the trigger.

There was a sharp crash; then a hissing roar that seemed to fill the room in an instant. Patterson tried to leap back, but he was too late. A burst of searing steam shot out of the boiler through the ragged hole Patterson's bullet had made after it ploughed through the old man's head. Patterson screamed in agony, but the steam was already enveloping him . . . cooking the skin of his face so that it was purplish red . . . turning his throat and chest into a darkened lump of seared meat . . . choking off his last breath so that it rattled for a moment. Then he was silent . . . and there was only the steady hiss of the escaping steam . . .



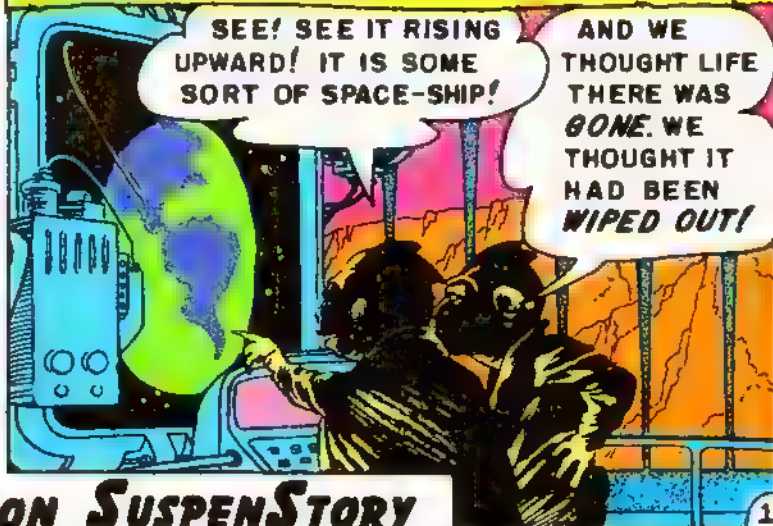
# THE ARRIVAL

THEY HAD WATCHED EARTH. THEY HAD SAT ON THEIR FUNCTIONAL WEIGHT-RESTERS BEFORE THEIR HUGE MAGNIFICATION SCREENS AND THEY'D WATCHED THE GREEN PLANET FOR COUNTLESS EONS. EACH MARTIAN NIGHT, WHEN THE SUN HAD SET BEYOND THE RED MOUNTAINS AND THE DEAD SEAS LAY BATHED IN THE FAINT LIGHT FROM THEIR TWO MOONS, THEY'D TURNED ON THEIR TELESCOPE-MACHINES AND THEY'D STUDIED GREEN EARTH AND THEY'D WONDERED. THEY'D WONDERED IF LIFE AS THEY KNEW IT EXISTED THERE TOO AS IT DID HERE ON MARS. AND THEN, ON ONE PARTICULAR NIGHT, THEY'D SEEN IT. THEY'D SEEN THE TINY PIN-POINTS OF LIGHT DOTTING THE LAND AREAS GO OUT. THEY'D SEEN THE FIERY GLOW RUSH AROUND THE GREEN SPHERE, SWALLOWING IT UP IN ONE HORRIBLE BLAZE OF ATOMIC FURY...



AND EVERY MARTIAN NIGHT SINCE THEN, FOR A MILLENNIUM, THEY'D TURNED THEIR TELESCOPE-MACHINES TO THE NOW BLACK PLANET AND THEY'D WAITED HOPEFULLY. BUT NO LIGHTS CAME ON AGAIN. NO GREEN AREAS SPRANG UP TO PUSH THE BLACKNESS BACK...

AND THEN, IN THE MARTIAN YEAR OF 131,549, IN WHAT BY OUR MEASUREMENT OF TIME WOULD BE THE NINETY-FIFTH THOUSANDTH YEAR AFTER THE GREAT ATOMIC EXPLOSION, THEY SAW IT. A TINY NEEDLE OF BLUE FLAME STREAKING AWAY FROM BLACK EARTH... STREAKING TOWARD THEIR RED PLANET...



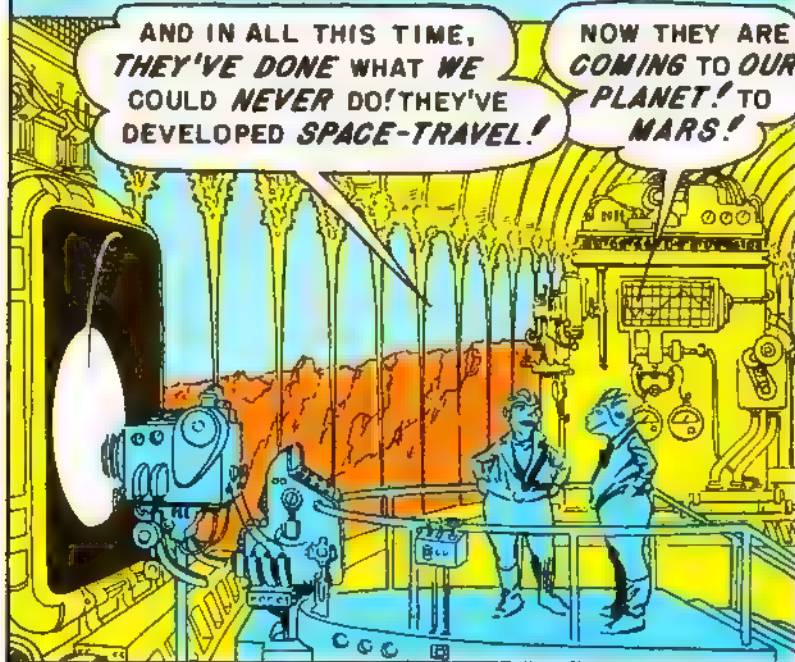
A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSORY



GROZQ MARVELED AT THE FINGER OF FLAME ON THE MAGNIFICATION SCREEN...

AND IN ALL THIS TIME, THEY'VE DONE WHAT WE COULD NEVER DO! THEY'VE DEVELOPED SPACE-TRAVEL!

NOW THEY ARE COMING TO OUR PLANET! TO MARS!



SPDORK WAS SILENT FOR A MOMENT. THEN, WHEN HE SPOKE, HIS MARTIAN WORDS WERE FILLED WITH WONDERMENT AND AWE...

WHAT WILL THEY LOOK LIKE, GROZQ? THESE EARTH CREATURES? WILL THEY BE DIFFERENT?

WHO IS TO SAY THAT LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS MUST EVOLVE AS IT DID HERE ON MARS, SPDORK. EVOLUTION IS LIKE A ROAD WITH MANY FORKS. THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO TURN...



PERHAPS THEY WILL BE GHASTLY CREATURES, GROZQ! CREATURES THAT WILL SICKEN US WHEN WE GAZE UPON THEM!

PERHAPS! AND IN TURN, MY DEAR SPDORK, WE MAY VERY WELL SICKEN THEM!

IN ANY CASE, SPDORK! WE MUST PREPARE FOR THEIR ARRIVAL!

WHAT IF THEY COME ON A MISSION OF WAR, AND NOT OF PEACE, GROZQ?

WE MUST BE PREPARED, GROZQ!

COME! LET US NOTIFY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL! THEY MUST MAKE PLANS!



THE BLUE STREAK OF FLAME IN THE MARTIAN SKY GREW BRIGHTER EACH NIGHT AS IT HURTTLED ACROSS THE BLACK GULF OF SPACE THAT SEPARATED EARTH FROM THE RED PLANET. IN TWO MONTHS, THE FLAME HAD GROWN SO BRIGHT IT WAS VISIBLE DURING THE MARTIAN DAY...

THEY ARE COMING CLOSER, GROZQ!

THEY WILL BE HERE, SOON!



AND THEN, ON THE 73RD NIGHT AFTER THE FIRST SIGHTING OF THE MARS-BOUND EARTH SPACE-SHIP, SOMETHING STRANGE HAPPENED. GROZQ HAD TURNED ON THE EQUIVALENT OF A RADIO TO LISTEN TO SOME MUSIC. THE JUMBLED GARBLE INTERRUPTED HIS FAVORITE PIECE...

BY THE GREAT CANAL OF ZKORL! WHAT INTERFERENCE IS THIS?

WAIT, GROZQ! LISTEN! COULD THOSE GUTTERAL SQUEALS BE A LANGUAGE... AN ALIEN LANGUAGE?





THE TWO MARTIANS LISTENED TO THE SQUAWKING SOUNDS THAT JAMMED THE MUSIC PROGRAM...

PERHAPS IT IS THE **EARTH-CREATURES...** BROADCASTING ON **OUR WAVE-LENGTHS!**

**HURRY! GET THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR** THAT WE'VE PREPARED FOR THEIR ARRIVAL!

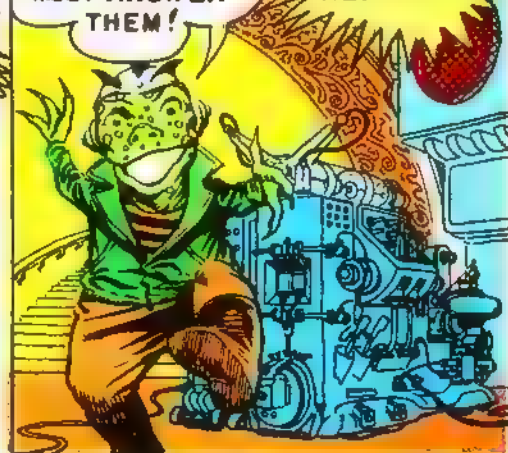
THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR, NEWLY DEVELOPED FOR THE OCCASION, WAS ROLLED OUT OF ITS STORAGE COMPARTMENT...

THERE! IT IS ON!

TZEE...OEEE...ZZT...  
PTEE...MARS!  
HELLO, MARS!  
THIS IS EARTH-ROCKET 029  
CALLING MARS.  
HELLO...

IT **IS** THEM! IT **IS** THE **EARTH CREATURES!**  
**HURRY, SPDORK!** CALL THE GOVERNMENT **TRANSMITTER!** WE MUST **ANSWER** THEM!

HELLO MARS! THIS IS EARTH ROCKET 029  
CALLING MARS!  
AW, IT'S **NO USE, CHIEF!** THEY DON'T **HEAR** US!



KEEP TRYING, ANYWAY! WE'VE GOT TO LET THEM KNOW WE'RE COMING ON A **PEACEFUL MISSION...SOMEHOW!**

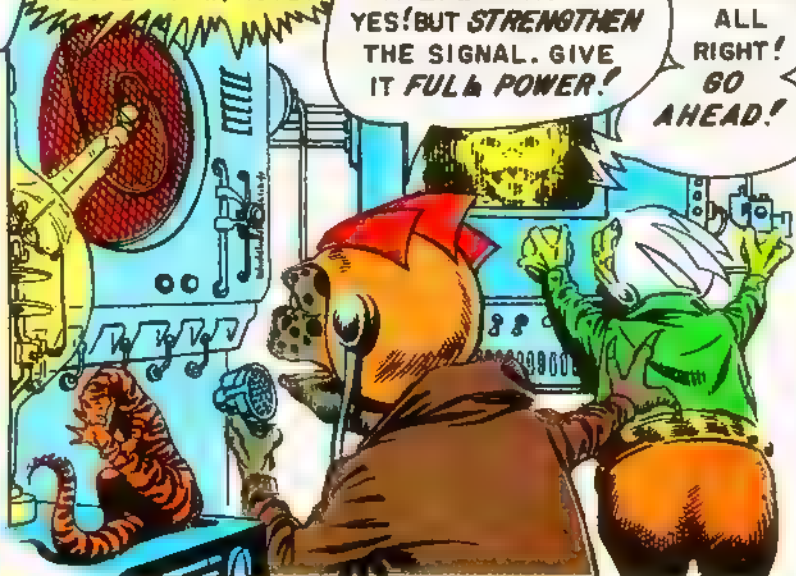
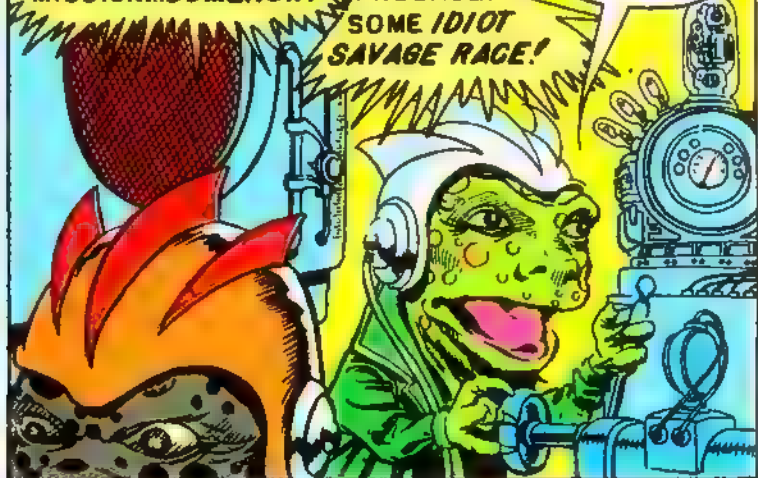
OKAY! BUT I THINK IT'S A **WASTE OF TIME!** THEY'RE PROBABLY SOME **IDIOT SAVAGE RACE!**

PUT ME THROUGH TO THE **GOVERNMENT TRANSMITTER!** QUICKLY!

HELLO, MARS! HELLO, MARS! THIS IS EARTH ROCKET...AW, NUTS!

YES! YES! **QUICKLY! SAME WAVELENGTH!** YES! BUT **STRENGTHEN** THE SIGNAL. GIVE IT **FULL POWER!**

AS YOU **WISH, SPDORK!** ALL RIGHT! **GO AHEAD!**



THIS IS **STUPID, CHIEF!** THEY DON'T...

HELLO, EARTH ROCKET 029. HELLO, EARTH ROCKET! THIS IS MARS, ANSWERING...

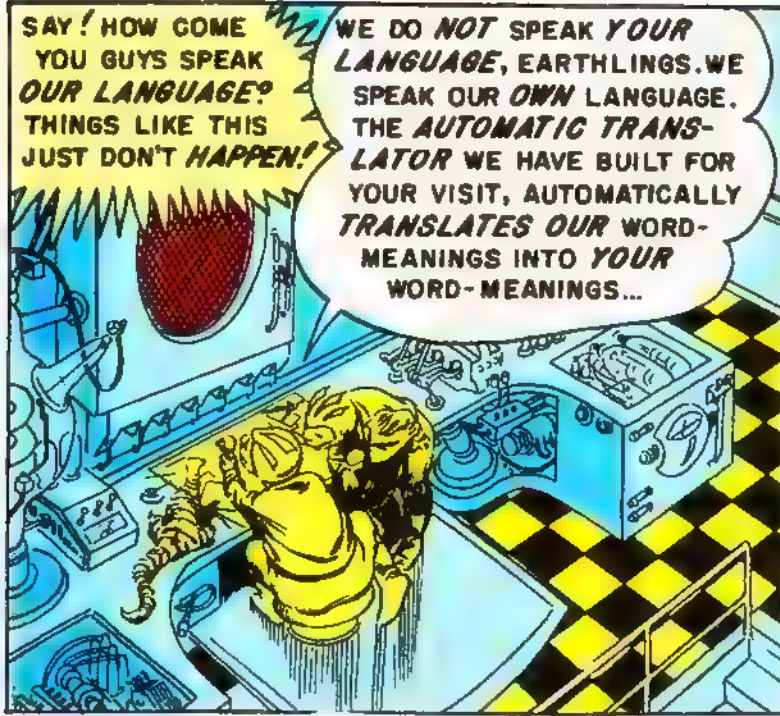
DO NOT SPEAK TOO **FAST, SPDORK!** THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR...

HEY! DID YOU HEAR **THAT, CHIEF?** HELLO MARS. **HELLO...**

**GREETINGS, VISITORS FROM EARTH! WE ON MARS BID YOU WELCOME! YOUR ARRIVAL IS EAGERLY AWAITED!**

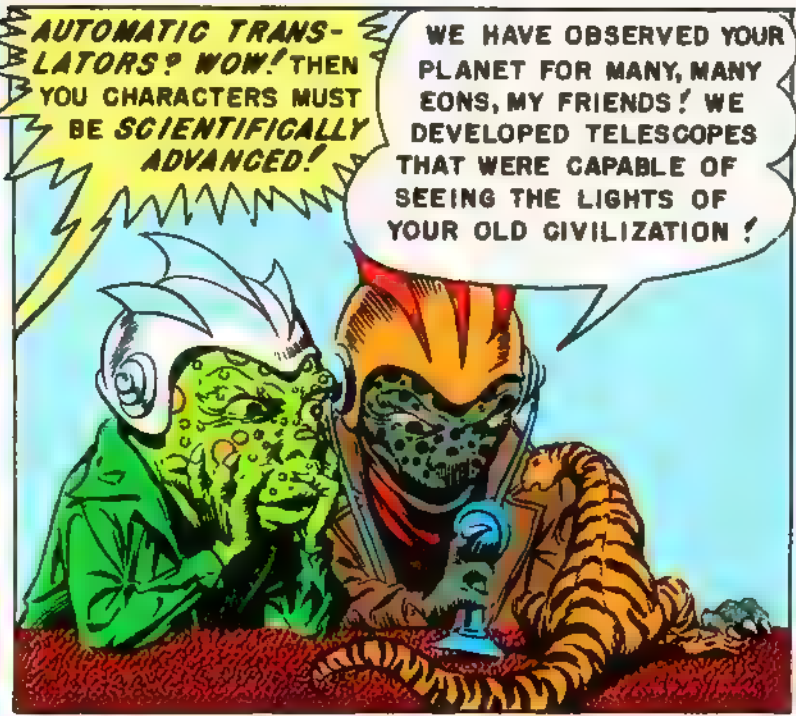






SAY! HOW COME YOU GUYS SPEAK OUR LANGUAGE? THINGS LIKE THIS JUST DON'T HAPPEN!

WE DO NOT SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE, EARTHLINGS. WE SPEAK OUR OWN LANGUAGE. THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR WE HAVE BUILT FOR YOUR VISIT, AUTOMATICALLY TRANSLATES OUR WORD-MEANINGS INTO YOUR WORD-MEANINGS...



AUTOMATIC TRANSLATORS? WOW! THEN YOU CHARACTERS MUST BE SCIENTIFICALLY ADVANCED!

WE HAVE OBSERVED YOUR PLANET FOR MANY, MANY EONS, MY FRIENDS! WE DEVELOPED TELESCOPES THAT WERE CAPABLE OF SEEING THE LIGHTS OF YOUR OLD CIVILIZATION!



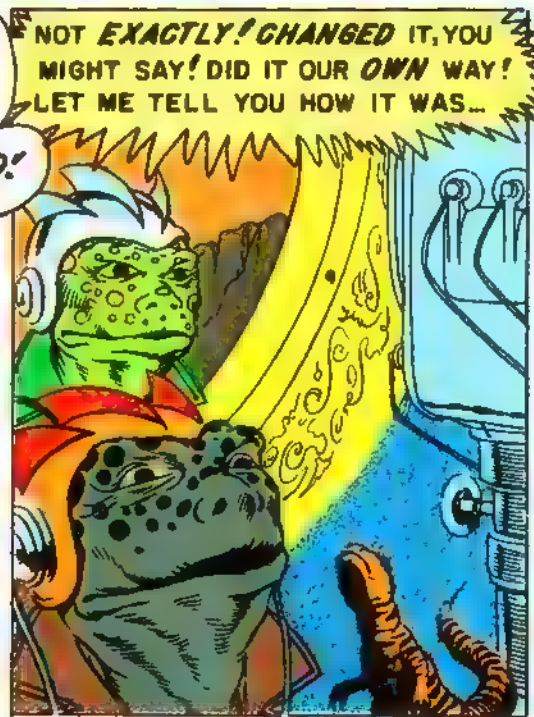
LIGHTS? OH! YOU MEAN THE OLD PRE-ATOMIC WAR CIVILIZATION!

YES! YES! WHAT HAPPENED? TELL US! WE SAW THE EXPLOSION!

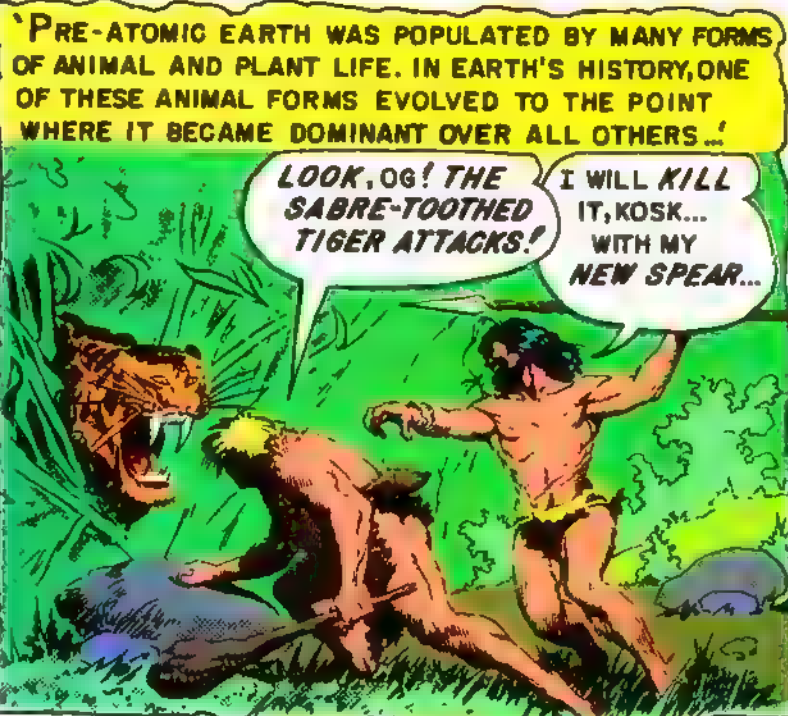


THAT WAS NINETY-FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO. IT WAS A WAR. IT ALMOST WIPED ALL LIFE OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH! BUT A FEW OF US MANAGED TO SURVIVE!

AND YOU REBUILT WHAT HAD BEEN DESTROYED!



NOT EXACTLY! CHANGED IT, YOU MIGHT SAY! DID IT OUR OWN WAY! LET ME TELL YOU HOW IT WAS...



LOOK, OG! THE SABRE-TOOTHED TIGER ATTACKS!

I WILL KILL IT, KOSK... WITH MY NEW SPEAR...



'WITH HIS DOMINATION, MAN BEGAN TO DEVELOP. HE REACHED INTO THE UNKNOWN AND HE LEARNED. HE STUDIED. HE BUILT...'

IT WILL BE A TOMB THAT WILL LAST FOR AGES, OH PHAROA!

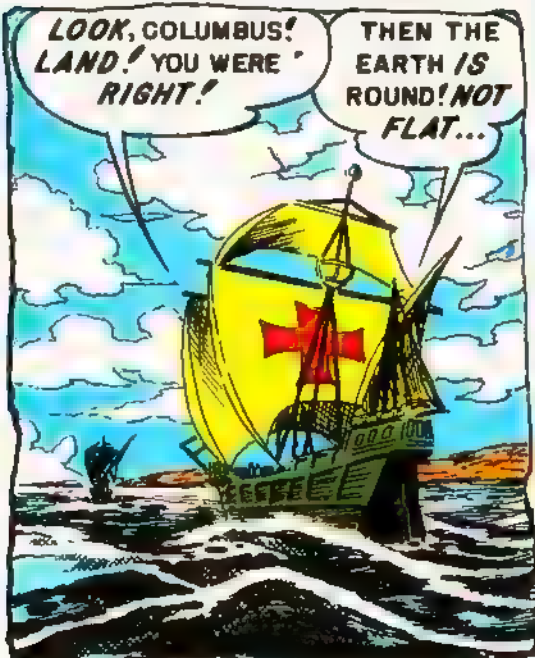
GOOD! GOOD!



'HE ADVANCED SCIENTIFICALLY...

LOOK, COLUMBUS!  
LAND! YOU WERE  
RIGHT!

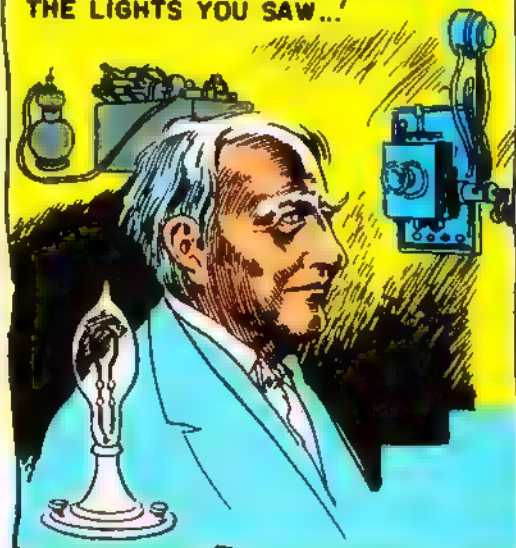
THEN THE  
EARTH IS  
ROUND! NOT  
FLAT...



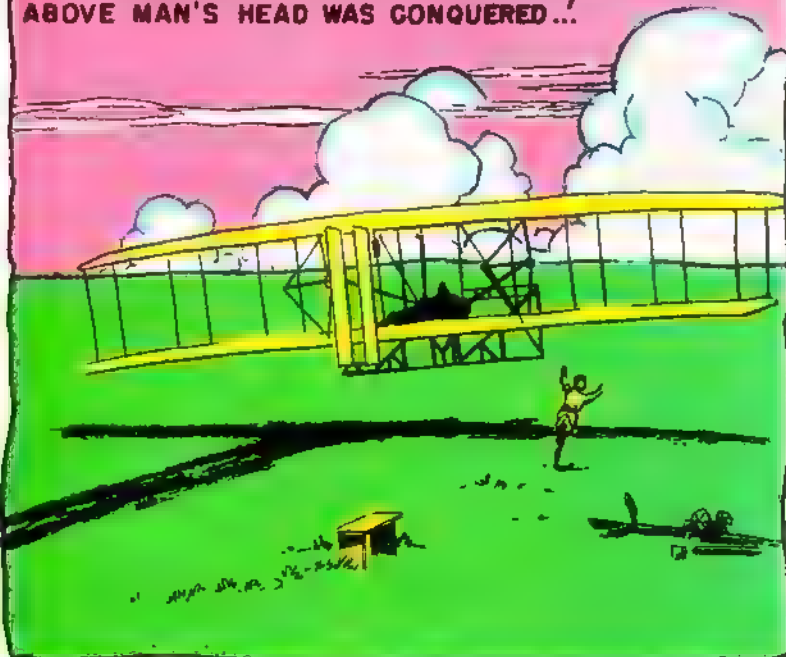
'AND YET, WITH ALL HIS GREAT  
ADVANCES, MAN OFTEN REVERTED  
TO HIS PRIMITIVE STATE. HE  
INDULGED IN THE WHOLESALE  
SLAUGHTER OF HIS FELLOWS! HE  
CALLED IT...WAR...'



'BUT IN SPITE OF THESE TEMPORARY  
REGRESSIONS, MAN CONTINUED  
TO ADVANCE. GREAT NEW SCIENTIFIC  
DEVELOPMENTS WERE DISCOVERED.  
THE LIGHTS YOU SAW...'



'THE PROBLEM OF FLIGHT WAS SOLVED. THE AIR  
ABOVE MAN'S HEAD WAS CONQUERED...'



'AND THEN, DURING ONE OF THESE REGRESSIONS...  
THESE WARS... A GREAT NEW FIELD WAS OPENED. A  
HORRIBLE WEAPON WAS DEVISED...'

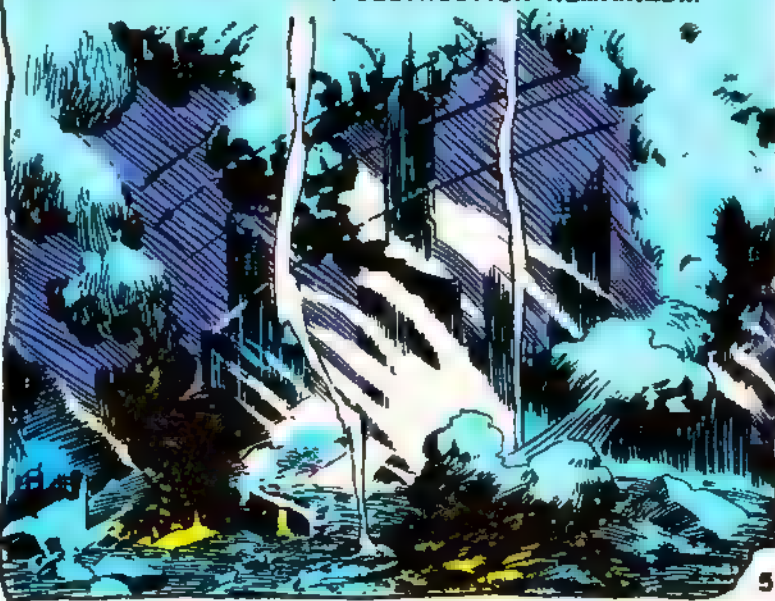


'THE GREAT NEW WEAPON HALTED THAT WAR. BUT  
PEACE DID NOT COME. INSTEAD CAME POLITICAL  
WRANGLING, NATION AGAINST NATION...'

THIS IS IT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!  
THE RUSSIAN DELEGATE IS GETTING  
UP... AND... HE IS LEAVING THE  
CONFERENCE TABLE!



'AND SO, THE HOLOCAUST DESCENDED UPON EARTH.  
AN ATOMIC WAR. THAT WAS WHAT YOU SAW. AND IN ITS  
WAKE, ONLY DEATH AND DESTRUCTION REMAINED...'





PRACTICALLY ALL LIFE WAS WIPED AWAY! BUT AS I SAID BEFORE, A FEW OF US SURVIVED!

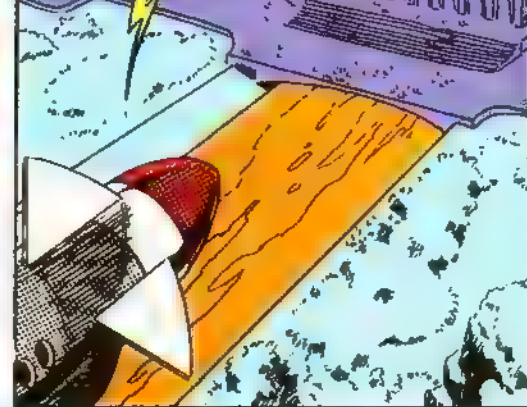
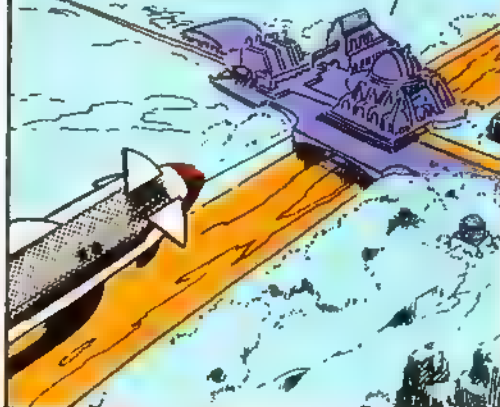
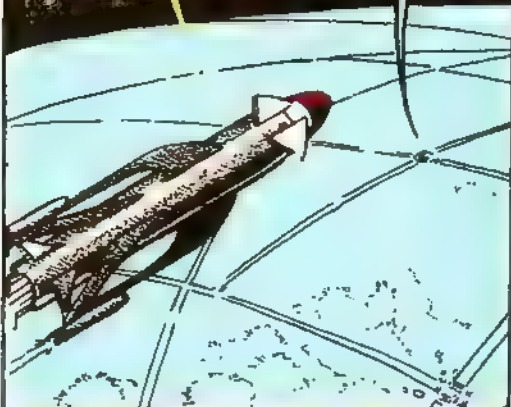
WE CAN SEE YOUR ROCKET, EARTHLING! YOU ARE GETTING CLOSE!

AND SO, IN THE FOLLOWING NINETY-FIVE THOUSAND YEARS, WE STARTED ANEW... BUILT A NEW AND GREATER CIVILIZATION!

YOU WILL BE **LANDING**, SOON!

IT WAS EASY TO BEGIN AGAIN! WE **KNEW** ALL THE MISTAKES! WE **KNEW** ALL THE FAULTS! WE WERE DETERMINED NOT TO MAKE THEM OURSELVES!

HOW SMALL YOUR SHIP IS!



WE ARE COMING IN NOW, MARTIAN! WE WILL BE **AMONG** YOU SHORTLY! I WILL **SIGN OFF** NOW! SEE YOU...

SAFE LANDING, EARTHLING!



THE SHIP CAME OUT OF THE MARTIAN NIGHT. IT CAME ON BLUE FLAME AND WHITE HEAT. AND IT DROPPED SMOOTHLY TO THE RED SAND...

THEY ARE DOWN!

HURRY!



THE SHIP WAS SCARCELY TWENTY FEET HIGH! IT SAT AMID THE SMOKE AND THE RED DUST. AND THEN A PORT OPENED...

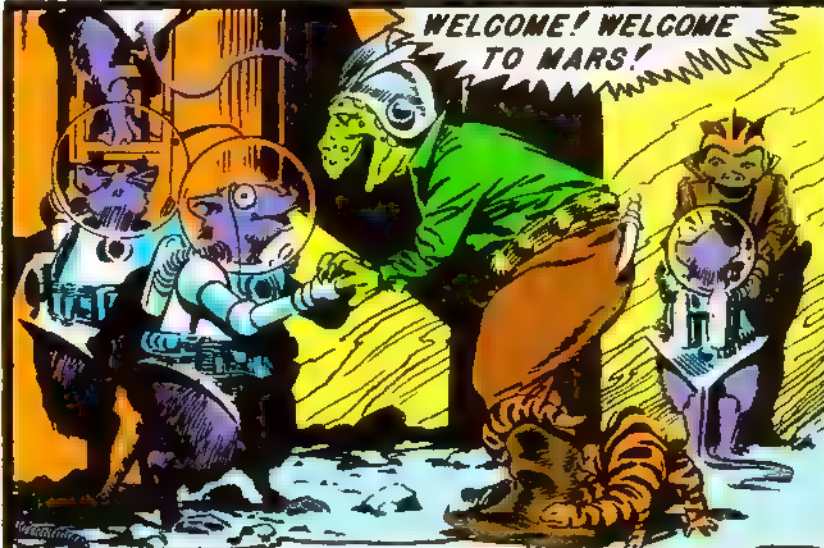
GREETINGS, MARTIANS!

GREETINGS, EARTHLINGS!



THE GREY FORMS DROPPED TO THE MARTIAN SURFACE. THEIR WHISKERS TWITCHED AND THEIR BEADY EYES GLOWED IN FRIENDSHIP...

WELCOME! WELCOME TO MARS!



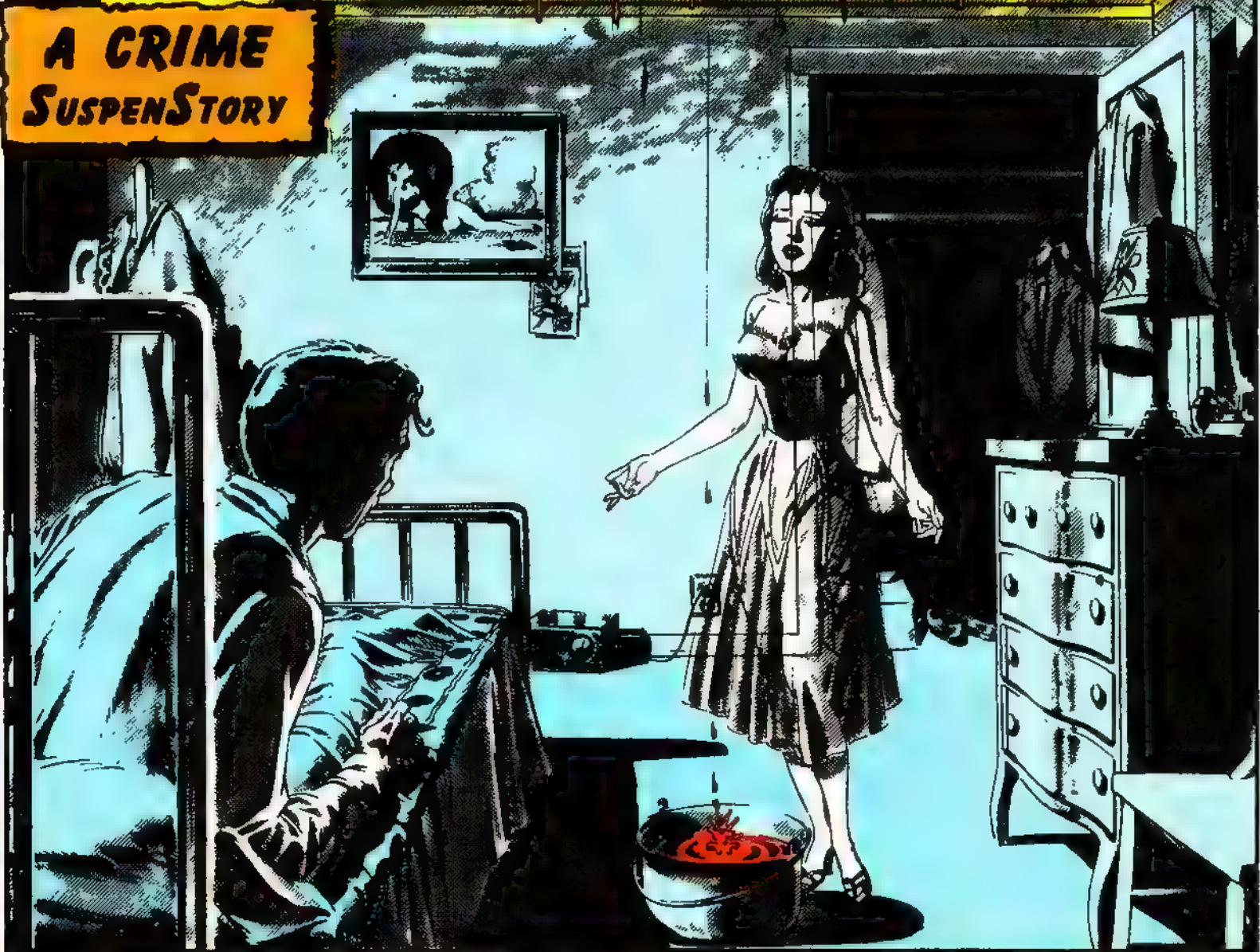
THEY WERE OF EARTH'S GREAT RACE. THEY WERE RATS!

-THE END-



# SLEEP NO MORE!

**A CRIME  
SUSPENSE STORY**



I WONDERED IF MRS. MONAHAN HAD CALLED THE POLICE. MRS. MONAHAN WAS MY LANDLADY. I LIVED ON THE TOP FLOOR OF HER ROOMING HOUSE. PAID \$18 A WEEK FOR ONE ROOM. THAT INCLUDED SUPPERS, OF COURSE. I'D LIVED AT MRS. MONAHAN'S FOR TWO YEARS. I KNEW THEY WERE POLICE THE MINUTE I OPENED THE DOOR...

THAT'S MR. FINNER NOW! HE LIVES ACROSS THE HALL FROM HER!

ER... MR. FINNER! MAY WE ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS?



I TRIED TO ACT SURPRISED AND INNOCENT. BUT I KNEW WHAT THEY WERE AFTER...

QUESTIONS? WHY, NOT AT ALL! ABOUT WHAT?

ABOUT IRENE LAUTON. HOW WELL DID YOU KNOW HER?





IRENE LAUTON WAS MISSING. SHE'D RENTED A ROOM FROM MRS. MONAHAN... RIGHT ACROSS THE HALL FROM ME, AS A MATTER OF FACT... AND THEN, SUDDENLY, SHE'D DISAPPEARED. HER CLOTHES WERE STILL THERE, IN HER ROOM... BUT SHE'D NEVER COME BACK FOR THEM...

MISS LAUTON? WHY... I DIDN'T KNOW HER WELL AT ALL! ONLY TO SAY HELLO, THAT IS.

WHEN DID YOU SEE HER LAST, MR. FINNER?



SATURDAY NIGHT. THAT'S... ER... THREE NIGHTS AGO. SHE WAS COMING OUT OF HER ROOM AS I WAS GOING IN... TO GO TO SLEEP. WE GREETED EACH OTHER. THAT'S ALL. WHY? WHY ALL THESE QUESTIONS?

IRENE LAUTON SEEMS TO HAVE VANISHED OFF THE FACE OF THIS EARTH, MR. FINNER. NO ONE HAS SEEN HER SINCE SATURDAY NIGHT. WE SUSPECT FOUL PLAY.



YOU MEAN...?

MISS LAUTON WAS AN UP-AND-COMING YOUNG ACTRESS, MR. FINNER. SHE HAD EVERYTHING TO LIVE FOR. WHY, SHE'D JUST BEEN SIGNED FOR A GOOD PART IN A BROADWAY PLAY.

SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO SHOW UP AT A PARTY... IN HER HONOR. SHE NEVER CAME. PEOPLE WITH EVERYTHING TO LIVE FOR JUST DON'T VANISH, MR. FINNER. THAT'S WHY WE'RE INVESTIGATING. HER PRODUCER CALLED US IN.

OH, DEAR! I... I DO HOPE NOTHING'S HAPPENED TO HER!

SO DO WE, MR. FINNER. MEANWHILE YOU AND THE REST OF THE BOARDERS BETTER STICK AROUND THIS PLACE TILL WE CLEAR THIS UP AND FIND MISS LAUTON. UNDERSTAND?

OH, YES, SIR!



AS I STARTED UP THE THREE FLIGHTS OF STAIRS TO MY TOP FLOOR ROOM, I COULD HEAR THE DETECTIVES BELOW QUESTIONING MRS. MONAHAN, AND HER ANSWERING THEM...

YOU SAY YOU SAW MISS LAUTON LEAVE FOR THE PARTY, MRS. MONAHAN?

THAT'S RIGHT. SHE LEFT ABOUT NINE. MR. FINNER HAD JUST GONE UP. SHE CAME DOWN... LAUGHING... SO HAPPY... SOB...



IRENE LAUTON! HOW WELL I REMEMBERED IRENE. ESPECIALLY THAT NIGHT. I WAS UNLOCKING THE DOOR TO MY ROOM WHEN SHE CAME OUT OF HERS. BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL, IRENE...

WHY, MISS LAUTON! HOW... ER... LOVELY YOU LOOK TONIGHT!

OH, MR. FINNER! THANK YOU. CONGRATULATE ME! I'VE BEEN SIGNED! I'M GOING TO A PARTY NOW... TO CELEBRATE...





I STOOD AT THE TOP OF THE THIRD FLIGHT OF STAIRS LISTENING TO THE POLICE BELOW...



I LOOKED ACROSS THE HALL TO IRENE LAUTON'S DOOR. I REMEMBERED HOW I'D ALWAYS LOOKED AT THAT DOOR LONGINGLY, EVER SINCE SHE'D MOVED IN. SHE WAS SO BEAUTIFUL. ESPECIALLY THAT NIGHT...



I... I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU, MISS LAUTON! MAY I... MAY I TELL YOU SOMETHING?

I'VE REALLY GOT TO RUN, MR. FINNER. I'M LATE! WHAT IS IT? MAKE IT QUICK!



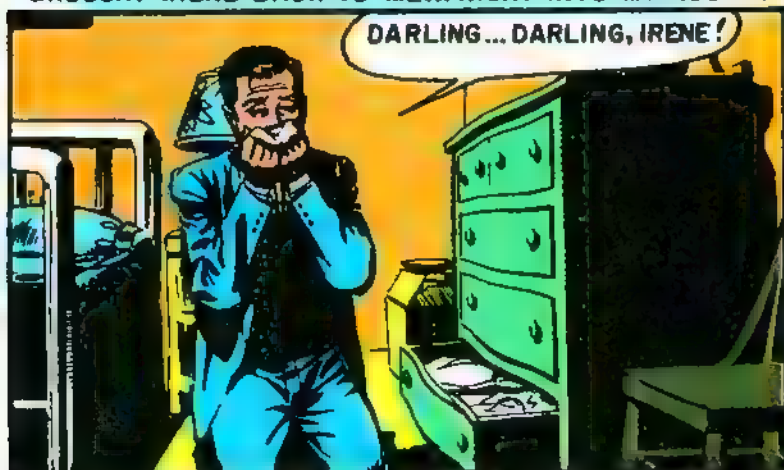
I REMEMBER HOW I'D SEEN HER DAY AFTER DAY... WEEK AFTER WEEK... SO YOUNG... SO LOVELY... AND HOW I'D WANTED TO TELL HER BUT NEVER FOUND THE WORDS... UNTIL THAT NIGHT... WHEN I SCRAPED UP ENOUGH COURAGE...



I REMEMBER HOW SHE LAUGHED. HOW LOUD SHE LAUGHED. AND HOW SHE LOOKED AT ME... AND THE RIDICULE THAT WAS IN HER EYES. AND HOW SHE TURNED AND HURRIED AWAY, DOWN THE STAIRS... AND HOW HER LAUGHTER DRIFTED BACK TO ME...



THE DOOR SLAMMING THREE FLIGHTS BELOW WOKE ME FROM MY REVERIE. THE POLICE WERE GONE. I WENT INTO MY ROOM. I LOCKED IT BEHIND ME. I WENT TO MY BUREAU AND DUG DOWN DEEP AND BROUGHT OUT THE LACE HANDKERCHIEF WITH THE HEAVY PERFUME. AND ITS SWEET SMELL FILLED MY NOSTRILS AND BROUGHT IRENE BACK TO ME... RIGHT INTO MY ROOM...



AFTER A WHILE I HID THE HANDKERCHIEF AND WENT TO BED. THAT NIGHT I TOSSED AND TURNED IN A FRETFUL NIGHTMARE OF IRENE, LAUGHING... AND HER LAUGHTER TURNING TO SCREAMS... AND THEN, SILENCE. THEN BLOOD... A POOL OF BLOOD. AND I AWOKE WITH A START IN THE MORNING TO SEE IT...



THERE WAS A SICKENING RED BLOTCH OF BLOOD OOZING OUT FROM THE CEILING ABOVE MY BED...



I LEAPED OUT OF BED AND SLIPPED ON A ROBE. I PEERED DOWN THE HALL. NO ONE WAS IN SIGHT. THE BATHROOM WAS EMPTY...



I HURRIED DOWN THE HALL AND WET A SPONGE. I CAME BACK INTO MY ROOM. I CLIMBED ONTO MY BED. I COULD JUST TOUCH THE CEILING. I SCRUBBED...



SOON, THE SPOT WAS GONE. I BREATHED EASIER AFTER THAT. I DRESSED AND HURRIED DOWNSTAIRS. I WAS LATE ALREADY...



I DIDN'T WANT MRS. MONAHAN TO SEE THE WET SPOT ON THE CEILING WHERE THE BLOOD STAIN HAD BEEN. THAT NIGHT, WHEN I CAME HOME, THE POLICE WERE THERE AGAIN...



BUT I DIDN'T TELL THEM WHAT HAPPENED ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES AFTER IRENE HAD LEFT! I DIDN'T TELL THEM HOW I HAD HEARD FOOTSTEPS OUT IN THE HALL AND HOW I'D OPENED MY DOOR...



I DIDN'T TELL THEM HOW MY BLOOD BURNED AS IT POUNDED INTO MY FACE, OUT AND INTO MY HEART, DOWN TO MY FINGERTIPS, AND THROUGH MY BODY. SHE STOOD THERE, HER SKIRT PULLED UP, REVEALING HER SHAPELY LEG. I DIDN'T TELL THEM HOW I STUMBLED FORWARD, AWKWARDLY...



AND I DIDN'T TELL THEM HOW SHE LAUGHED AT MY AWKWARD ATTEMPT AND SLAMMED THE DOOR IN MY FACE. AND HOW I WENT BACK INTO MY ROOM AND STARED OUT OF THE WINDOW, DOWN AT THE BACK YARD. HOW I SAW MRS. MONAHAN THERE, SITTING IN THE COOL NIGHT AIR, WITH THE OTHERS... THE OTHER BOARDERS. THEY WERE PLAYING CARDS LIKE THEY ALWAYS DID. I KNEW THEN THAT NO ONE ELSE HAD SEEN IRENE RETURN...





THE POLICE WENT AWAY, AND I WENT TO BED, AND AGAIN I HAD THAT HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE...LAUGHING...AND SCREAMING...AND BLOOD... AND WHEN I AWOKE IN THE MORNING.

OH, LORD! IT'S THERE AGAIN!

THE POOL OF BLOOD BLOTING ACROSS THE WHITE CEILING LOOKED LIKE SOME HORRIBLE WOUND IN A FAIR SKIN. IRENE'S SKIN...

I'VE GOT TO CLEAN IT OFF! IT MUST BE SEEPING THROUGH!

I RUBBED WITH THE SPONGE AS I HAD DONE THE MORNING BEFORE, BUT THIS TIME IT *DIDN'T* COME OFF...

WHAT WILL I DO? THEY'LL *SEE* IT... AND THEY'LL *KNOW*...

I DRESSED QUICKLY AND HURRIED DOWNSTAIRS TO THE HARDWARE STORE. I HAD TO WAIT FIFTEEN MINUTES FOR IT TO OPEN UP. I NEARLY WENT CRAZY FROM NERVOUSNESS. I KEPT WONDERING IF MRS. MONAHAN WOULD COME INTO MY ROOM TO CLEAN IT AND SEE THE BLOOD AND KNOW...

I RUSHED BACK TO THE BOARDING HOUSE. MRS. MONAHAN WAS JUST GOING UP THE STAIRS WITH HER CARPET SWEEPER AND BROOM WHEN I PUSHED PAST HER. I WAS IN TIME. I SLAMMED INTO MY ROOM AND LOCKED THE DOOR FROM THE INSIDE. AND THEN I PAINTED OUT THAT AWFUL BLOODY SPOT...

OKAY, MISTER! I'M SORRY I'M LATE! CAR TROUBLE! WHAT'LL IT BE?

A CAN OF WHITE PAINT, PLEASE. AND A BRUSH. AND *HURRY!*

THERE! THERE! IT'S GONE!

MRS. MONAHAN POUNDED ON MY DOOR AND INSISTED THAT I LET HER CLEAN THE ROOM SINCE IT HADN'T BEEN CLEANED THE PREVIOUS DAY, SO I FINALLY LET HER IN. SHE STARED, FIRST AT MY PAINT-SPATTERED HANDS, THEN AT THE PAINT CAN, AND THEN AT THE WHITE SPOT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE YELLOWED CEILING...

I LOST HALF A DAY'S PAY PAINTING THAT CEILING UNDER MRS. MONAHAN'S WATCHFUL EYE. BUT AT LEAST SHE NEVER KNEW ABOUT THE BLOODSTAIN. THEN, THE NEXT MORNING, AFTER ANOTHER SICKENING NIGHTMARISH SLEEP...

THERE WAS A *WET SPOT!* I THOUGHT I'D *TOUCH IT UP!*

LOOKS AWFUL! YOU'LL HAVE TO DO THE *WHOLE CEILING*, NOW! AND *MIND YOU!* CAREFUL OF THAT *BED-SPREAD!* IT'S *BRAND NEW!*

OH, MY GOD! MY GOD!

IT WAS BACK *AGAIN!* THE BLOODSTAIN! IT SPREAD OVER THE DRY NEW WHITE PAINT BIGGER THAN EVER. AND IT WAS DRIPPING... *DRIPPING* ON MRS. MONAHAN'S *BED-SPREAD*...



I STARTED TO PAINT! I USED UP THE REST OF THE CAN. I COVERED THE BLOOD AND IT STOPPED DRIPPING...

THERE! THANK HEAVENS! IT'S STOPPED! AND I CAN'T SEE IT, NOW!



THEN I DRESSED AND GATHERED UP MRS. MONAHAN'S BLOOD-SPATTERED SPREAD. I RUSHED DOWNSTAIRS WITH IT...

HERE! WHERE'RE YOU GOING WITH THAT BED-SPREAD?

OH! I...I'M TAKING IT INTO THE GLEANERS, MRS. MONAHAN! I DID GET SOME PAINT ON IT, AFTER ALL!



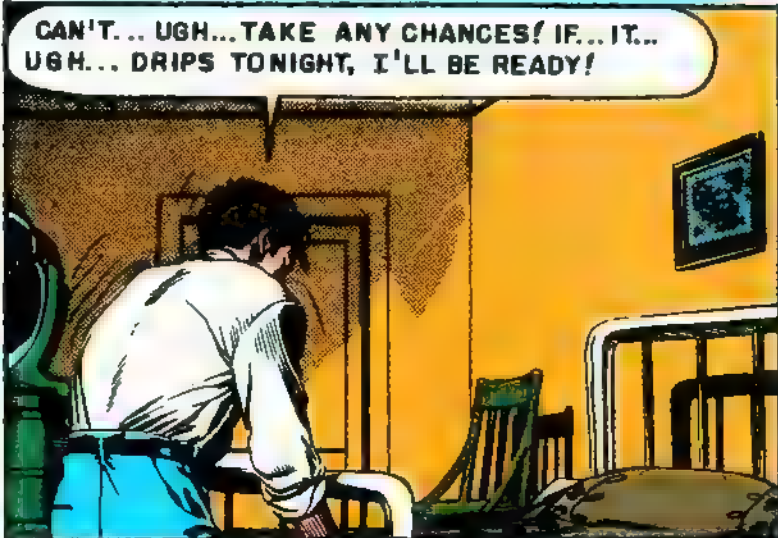
I BURIED THAT BEDSPREAD IN A LOT UP THE STREET! I KNEW I COULDN'T TAKE IT INTO A DRY-CLEANERS... NOT WITH THESE BLOOD STAINS ALL OVER IT LIKE THAT! THEN THEY'D KNOW. SO I BURIED IT...

THERE! NO ONE WILL FIND IT HERE!

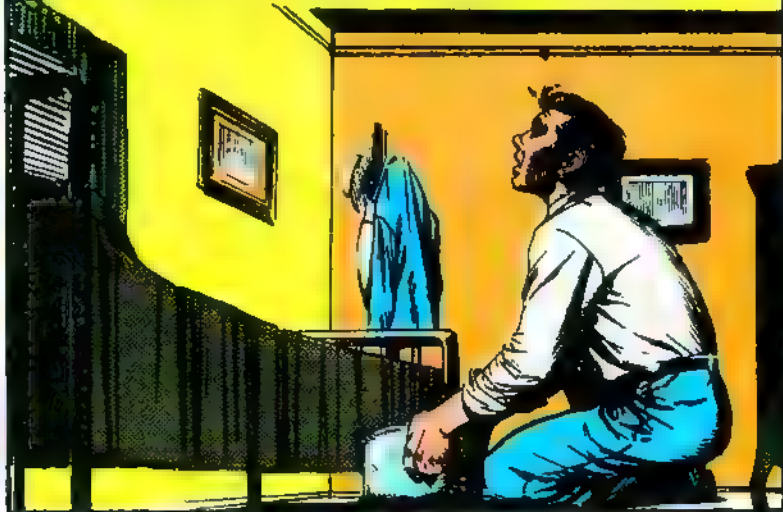


I WENT DOWNTOWN AND SHOPPED TILL I FOUND THE STORE WHERE MRS. MONAHAN HAD BOUGHT THE SPREAD...AND I BOUGHT A NEW ONE. AND THAT NIGHT, I MOVED THE BED...

CAN'T... UGH...TAKE ANY CHANCES! IF... IT... UGH... DRIPS TONIGHT, I'LL BE READY!



I SLIPPED DOWNSTAIRS AFTER EVERYONE HAD GONE TO BED, AND I TOOK A POT FROM THE STOVE. I CAME BACK AND PUT IT UNDER THE SPOT WHERE THE BLOODSTAIN OOOZED OUT OVER THE CEILING...



AND THEN I WENT TO BED. ALL NIGHT I DREAMED THAT SAME CRAZY DREAM, AND IN THE MORNING I AWOKE TO THE STEADY THROBBING OF THE BLOOD DRIPPING INTO THE POT. IT WAS HALF FULL, AND THE STAIN SPREAD OVER THE WHITE, WHITE CEILING...

GOT TO STOP IT! GOT TO STOP IT!



BUT I'D USED UP THE PAINT! SO I RUSHED DOWNSTAIRS AND OUT TO THE HARDWARE STORE. AND WHEN I CAME BACK WITH THE NEW CAN, THEY WERE WAITING FOR ME...IN MY ROOM...

MR. FINNER. WE'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU!

OH, GOD, NO! YOU... YOU SAW IT!





THEY WERE SITTING ON THE BED AND THE POT BESIDE THEM WAS ALMOST FULL. I LOOKED UP AND THEY FOLLOWED MY GLANCE. THE BLOODSTAIN GLOWED ANGRY RED...

SAW *WHAT*, MR. FINNER? WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT?

THE *BLOOD*! THEN YOU *KNOW*! YOU KNOW I *KILLED* HER!



THEY LOOKED AT EACH OTHER, AND THEN AT ME...

WOULD YOU CARE TO TELL US ABOUT IT, MR. FINNER?

SHE LAUGHED AT ME! SHE DIDN'T THINK I WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR HER. SHE DIDN'T DESERVE TO BE SO BEAUTIFUL. SHE WAS CHEAP...AND SHE'D ONLY GIVE HER BEAUTY TO SOME ONE CHEAP...TO SOME ONE'S CHEAP GLAWING PAWS...

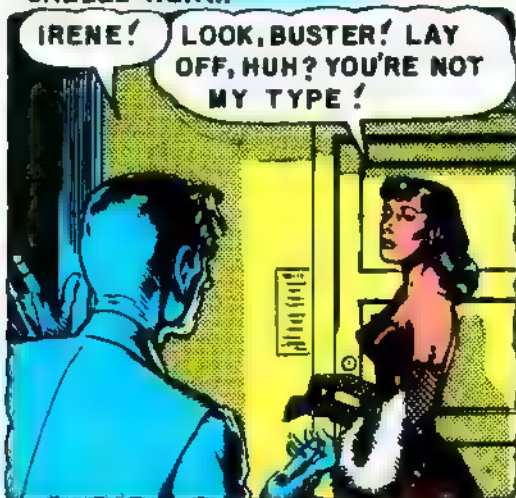


'SO I WAITED TILL SHE CAME OUT OF HER ROOM THAT NIGHT! OH, YES, SHE'D RETURNED. SHE'D COME BACK TO PUT ON A NEW STOCKING. THE OLD ONE HAD GOTTEN A RUN, WHEN SHE CAME OUT, I CALLED HER...'

'I HELD OUT THE TISSUE-PAPER-WRAPPED BOX!'

IT'S FOR *YOU*, IRENE! A GIFT... FOR LUCK!

FOR ME, FINNER? HOW NICE...



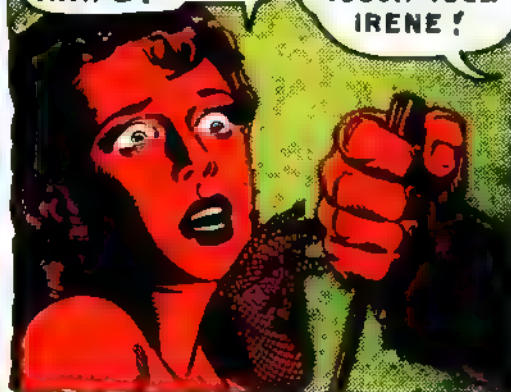
IRENE! LOOK, BUSTER! LAY OFF, HUH? YOU'RE NOT MY TYPE!



'SHE CAME INTO MY ROOM. THE WINDOW WAS SHUT TIGHT AND THE BLINDS DRAWN SO THAT MRS. MONAHAN AND THE OTHERS WOULD NOT HEAR HER...'

WHAT IS IT, FINNER? WHAT...WHAT? GASP! MR. FINNER! PUT DOWN THAT KNIFE!

YOU'RE TOO LOVELY TO LET SOME ONE ELSE TOUGH YOU... IRENE!



SO I *KILLED* HER. I *STABBED* HER SO MANY TIMES, MY ARM HURT! THEN I PUT HER UP *THERE*...IN THE *STORAGE ATTIC*. THERE'S AN ENTRANCE THROUGH THAT *CLOSET*. I FOUND IT A FEW MONTHS AGO. NO ONE EVER *USED* IT! I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE *SAFE* THERE...UNTIL THE *BLOOD* STARTED *DRIPPING*...

*BLOOD?* *DRIPPING?* *WHERE?*

ONE OF THEM CLIMBED UP INTO THE ATTIC...

SHE'S *HERE* ALL RIGHT, GOBB! LOOKS LIKE A *PIN CUSHION*!

*THERE*! DON'T YOU *SEE* IT *THERE*... ON THE *CEILING*... *DRIPPING* INTO THAT *POT*?

MRS. MONAHAN *CALLED* US BECAUSE YOU WERE *ACTING SUSPICIOUS*, FINNER. SHE SAID YOU *WASHED* THE *CEILING* ONCE, *PAINTED* IT *TWICE*, AND TOOK HER NEW SPREAD OUT AND *BURIED* IT! WE *DUG* IT *UP*, FINNER, LISTEN. THERE'S *NO BLOODSTAIN* ON THAT *CEILING*. *NO BLOOD* IN THAT *POT*. IT'S IN YOUR *MIND*. YOU'RE *SICK*, FINNER... YOU'D BETTER COME ALONG WITH US.



THEY SAID THERE WERE *NEVER* ANY BLOOD STAINS. THEY SAID THAT HALF-FULL POT WAS *EMPTY*. BUT I DIDN'T BELIEVE THEM. WHY SHOULD I? THEY'RE ALL CRAZY! —THE END—





YOU SAY IT'S A 45-MINUTE BUS TRIP, WITH A TRANSFER, TO THE COMIC BOOK SHOP? YOU SAY IT'S A HARROWING 30-MINUTE DRIVE ON THE EXPRESSWAY TO THE MALL, AND THEN A 30-MINUTE MERRY-GO-ROUND RIDE TO FIND A PARKING PLACE? YOU SAY YOUR TOWN DOESN'T EVEN **HAVE** A COMIC BOOK SHOP OR BOOKSTORE? IS THAT WHAT'S TROUBLING YOU, BUNKY? WELL, THEN, YOU SHOULD...



# SUBSCRIBE!



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START MY 4-ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION TO THE FOLLOWING **EC COMICS**:

- |                                |  |                                     |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> HAUNT | <input type="checkbox"/> WEIRD Sci-Fan | <input type="checkbox"/> TWO-FISTED |

NAME & ADDRESS:

REMIT \$8 EACH (\$12 OUTSIDE US IN US FUNDS)  
 MISSOURI RESIDENTS MUST ADD 6.225% SALES TAX

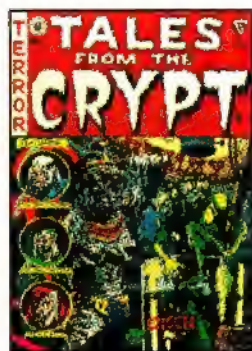
LOSE YOUR SCISSORS? USE YOUR OWN PAPER!



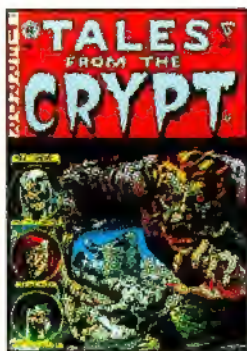
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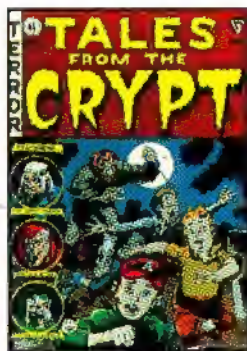
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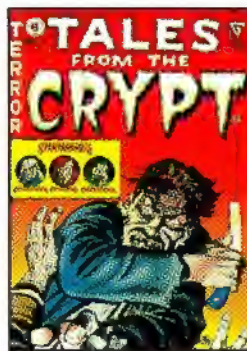
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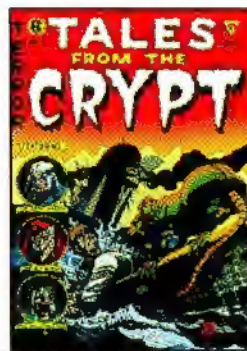
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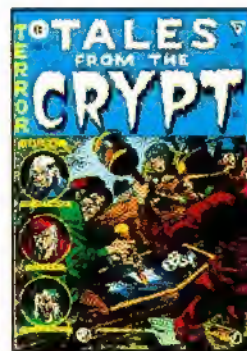
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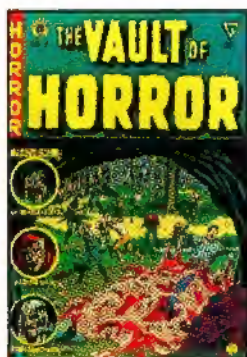
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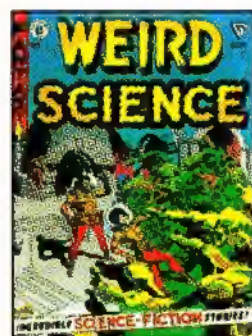
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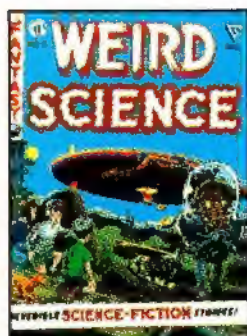
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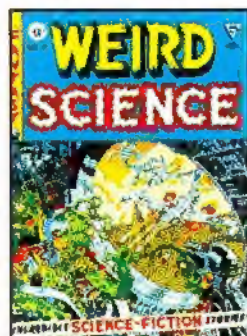
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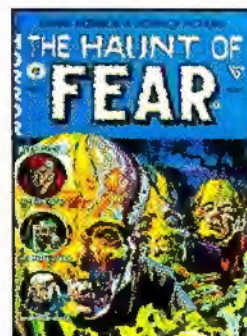
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